THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

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St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans

A Practical Exposition

By CHARLES GORE, M.A., D.D.

OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE RESURRECTION
CANON OF WESTMINSTER
HON. CHAPLAIN TO THE QUEEN

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PREFACE

A good excuse is needed for adding to the large number of excellent commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans which already exist. But I think there is such an excuse. These commentaries are not of the sort which readers who are educated but not scholarly find it easy to master; so that in fact this epistle is at the present day very much misunderstood or ignored by such people. And again, partly owing to its interpretation at the period of the Reformation and by some Evangelicals of later date, it is still practically to a great extent viewed with discomfort and neglected by those who most value the name of Catholic. My excuse then for adding to the expositions of the Romans lies in these facts. One who is necessarily immersed in the practical work of the Christian ministry, and is yet struggling to keep himself in some sense in line with biblical scholarship, if his life involves special disadvantages, may yet hope to be useful in interpreting to ordinary Christians

the results of the scholars. And I am persuaded that it requires one who enters thoroughly into the spirit of churchmanship, or the obligation of the one body, to interpret with any completeness the mind of St. Paul.

This volume has practically no more connexion with lectures delivered in Westminster Abbey last Lent, than is implied in its being an exposition of the same epistle by the same person.

The method of exposition in this volume is the same as that pursued in its predecessor on the Epistle to the Ephesians. After a general introduction, each section of the Revised Version is taken, or in some cases two sections are taken together, and prefaced by an analysis or paraphrase, as seems most useful, and followed by further explanation of the main ideas or phrases which each section contains.

The 'appended notes' I have been obliged to defer to the end of the second volume—which, I hope, will appear within a year—with a view of approximately equalizing the size of the two volumes.

CHARLES GORE.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY,
Conversion of St. Paul, 1899.

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THE
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Introduction.

i.

St. Paul's great Epistle to the Romans was written, as may be quite confidently asserted, from Corinth, during the second visit to Greece recorded in the Acts[1], i.e. in the beginning of the year commonly reckoned 58, but perhaps more correctly 56 A.D.—the year following the writing of the Epistles to the Corinthians. The reasons for this confident statement, and indeed for all that needs to be said about the circumstances under which St. Paul wrote and the conditions of Christianity at Rome, become apparent chiefly in connexion with the later parts of the epistle which are not included in this volume. They

[1] Acts xx. 2-3.

shall therefore be omitted here, and we will content ourselves for the moment with a very brief statement of the results in which scholars are now finding, as it would seem, final agreement.

The existence of Christians at Rome was due not to any apostolic founding, for no apostle appears yet to have visited Rome, but to the sort of 'quiet and fortuitous filtration[1]' of Christians from various parts of the empire to its great centre which must naturally have taken place; for from all quarters there was a tendency to Rome. 'Some from Palestine, some from Corinth, some from Ephesus and other parts of Proconsular Asia, possibly some from Tarsus, and more from the Syrian Antioch, there was in the first instance, as we may believe, nothing concerted in their going; but when once they arrived in the metropolis, the freemasonry common among Christians would soon make them known to each other, and they would form, not exactly an organized Church'—that may well have been the result of the later presence of St. Paul and St. Peter—'but such a fortuitous assemblage of Christians as was

[1] Hort's *Prolegomena to Romans and Ephesians* (Macmillan, 1895), p. 9.

only waiting for the advent of an apostle to constitute one[1].' Among this assemblage of Christians it appears evident from St. Paul's language[2] that there must have been Jews as well as Gentiles; but the dominant character of the church was Gentile[3]. It is perhaps only putting this in another way to say that there would have been among the Roman Christians elements of hostility to St. Paul and his teaching, but Christianity as St. Paul taught it would have been in the ascendant. And probably St. Paul's special informants about affairs there would have been his special friends, Prisca and Aquila[4].

The character of the epistle written to these Christians of the capital is marked. It has beyond any other of St. Paul's epistles the character of an ordered theological treatise. Of course it assumes the existence of accepted Christian principles—the rudimentary instruction or Christian 'tradition'—in the minds of those to whom it was addressed[5]. But it takes certain of these principles of the Christian

[1] Sanday and Headlam's *Commentary* (T. & T. Clark, 1895), p. xxviii. This commentary is henceforth referred to as S. & H.

[2] See Rom. ii. 17; iii. 9, &c.

[3] See Rom. i. 13; xi. 13–32; xv. 14–21.

[4] Rom. xvi. 3.

[5] See Rom. vi. 17, and remarks p. 234; cf. S. & H., p. xli.

religion and develops them systematically and argumentatively; though again, it must be explained, the argument is very far from being barely logical, but is full of the deepest feeling, showing itself in passages of memorable eloquence which live in the hearts of all of us.

Why this particular epistle should have this character of a systematic treatise is not hard to see. St. Paul was reaching the end of his great controversy for the catholicity of the Gospel, against the Judaizers—that is, for the equal position of Gentiles and Jews in the Church, and against the obligation upon the Gentiles of circumcision and the ceremonial law. That controversy was the occasion of the apostolic conference at Jerusalem, which is described both by St. Luke in the Acts[1] and, from the point of view of St. Paul's own 'apology,' in the Epistle to the Galatians[2]. It is felt at its whitest heat in that intensely concentrated and passionate epistle. But by the time that the Epistle to the Romans came to be written the controversy was quieting down. The victory of catholicism over Judaism was as good as won. The great principle of justification by faith, not by works of the law, had developed itself lucidly

[1] Acts xv. 1–35. [2] Gal. ii. 1–10.

and clearly in St. Paul's mind, and flowed out in our epistle in an ordered sequence of thought, rich, profound, and mature.

And there were special reasons why it should have been expressed in writing at this moment, and to the Roman Christians. Though the heat of the conflict inside the Church was over, the fierce hostility of many of the Jews, both within and without the Church, to St. Paul personally was by no means past. Now St. Paul was on his way up to Jerusalem with the money collected in the Gentile churches for the poor brethren there. He attached great importance to this expression of Gentile goodwill, and almost more importance to its acceptance at his hands by the Jerusalem Christians[1]. It was to be a link of mutual, practical love to bind the divergent elements in the Church together. But he felt, and as experience showed rightly, that his enterprise would be attended with great peril to his life. This epistle therefore, like his speech at Miletus, has something of the character of 'last words[2].' He is in writing it committing to the future the fruits of his labours, so far as they can be expressed in a doctrine, at a moment when he feels that their continuance is being

[1] Rom. xv. 25–32. [2] Hort, l. c., p. 44.

seriously imperilled. And this summary of his life's teaching in its most characteristic aspect is most fitly addressed to the Christians of the great city which was the centre of the then world. St. Paul already conceived of Christianity as, in prospect at least, the religion of the empire. It was vastly important, therefore, that the capital should know it and hold it in its full glory and richness. He himself, if he escaped safe through the visit to Jerusalem, was bent on immediately going thither and securing this great end by his personal ministry[1]. But he could not depend on the future. He must seize the golden moment—buying up the opportunity at least by a letter.

This, in very brief words, is an account of the circumstances and conditions under which the Epistle to the Romans was written, and it must suffice for the moment till some of the details are presented to us in its later chapters.

ii.

There are men of whom it is especially true that their teaching is the outcome of their own

[1] Rom. i. 10, 11; xv. 22–24.

personal experience. If a man's teaching is to have any real force this must be in a measure true in any case. But in some men the personal experience has set an exceptionally strong impress upon the intellectual convictions, and so upon the teaching. Such men—otherwise very different from one another—are Augustine, Dante, Luther, Bunyan, Newman. Such an one was St. Paul. His intellectual theory is on fire with the emotions bred of a personal experience, both bitter and sweet, but always intense. And if there is professedly more of autobiography in the Epistle to the Galatians, yet in fact we know St. Paul's interior life, both before and after his 'conversion,' so far as we know it at all, mainly through the generalized account of it in the Epistle to the Romans. For the doctrine of justification by faith, not by works of the law, developed in this epistle, is the record of his personal experience reduced to a general principle. St. Paul had, on the lines of his Pharisaic education, in the first half of his life zealously sought to be justified by works, and had found out his mistake.

What is the real meaning of this phrase? Ordinarily we Englishmen find it natural to appropriate St. James' 'common sense' language

about justification rather than St. Paul's [1], and say that faith is surely of no moral value without works or good actions, and that we can be justified by nothing else except our conduct. Or if the Pharisees are pointed to with their rigid ecclesiastical observances as types of men seeking to be justified before God by the merits of their works, then, in this sense of works, we feel that the idea of justification by such means, apart from deeper moral effort, is one which has passed out of our horizon. Yet if we get to the moral essence of the Pharisaic idea, we may still find it lying very close at hand to us, even though we do not know what a phylactery means, and are at a safe distance from fasting twice in the week, or giving tithes of all that we acquire. A well-to-do Englishman, of whatever class, has a strong sense of respectability. He has a code of duty and honour which he is at pains to observe. A soldier, a gentleman, a woman of fashion, a peasant's wife, a schoolboy, and an undergraduate, representing not more than the average moral levels of their different classes, will all of them make really great sacrifices to fulfil the requirements of their respective codes. Their conscience requires

[1] On the relation between the two, see later, p. 168.

this of them, and they would be miserable in falling short of it. But their conscience is also limited to it. They resent the claim of a progressive morality. Conscientious within the region of the traditional and the expected, they are often almost impenetrable to light from beyond. They are nervously afraid of the very idea of subjecting their life to a fundamental revision in the light of Christ's claim, or to the idea of surrender to the divine light wherever it may lead. But this frame of mind—conscientiousness within a limited and well-established area accepted by public opinion, coupled with resentment at whatever completer and diviner claim may interfere to disconcert one's self-satisfaction, and bid one begin afresh on a truer basis—is that very attempt to be justified by works which appeared in the case of the Pharisees, only dressed in very different guise to that in which the conditions of modern England clothe it.

For the Pharisees of the Gospels were the later representatives of the Hasidaeans, i.e. Chasidim or 'pious' folk, whom we hear of in the Books of Maccabees[1]. The later religious development of Israel lay along the lines of

[1] 1 Macc. ii. 42; vii. 13 ff.

rigid reverence for the law. In days then of general laxity and a general prevalence of Greek customs, these pious Israelites united themselves to promote the devout observance of their law. Their relation to Maccabaean heroes and rulers varied, as religious or political motives were uppermost in the Maccabaean house. They themselves pursued one consistent aim. They came to be known as the Pharisees, the separated or the separatists, the party who kept aloof from everything common or unclean. As such they represented the religious nation in its later development. They had the bulk of the people, and especially the women, with them. They had consequently, as Josephus tells us, an irresistible influence upon public affairs, and especially upon religious affairs, and they held the social position befitting the legitimate religious leaders of God's own people.

This position, with its accompanying reputation, they doubtless deserved by their zeal for the law, and for the 'traditions of the fathers' which hedged about or interpreted the law. But according to the solemn witness of Christ and St. Paul, a disastrous lowering of the best moral standard of the Old Testament scriptures had taken place among them. The Mosaic law was,

of course, a matter mainly of outward observance, and therefore would become a matter of rigid social requirement within the area of such a body as the Pharisees. Nowhere does public opinion act more strongly than in a close religious circle. But the social requirement according to tradition came to be substituted for that deeper spiritual relation of the 'holy nation' and the individuals composing it to God and His will, which is the real moral essence of the Old Testament. 'How can ye believe,' our Lord said to them, 'which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not[1]?' This is the central moral weakness of the Pharisaic position. A social or ecclesiastical tradition had taken the place of the will of God. This social tradition was rigid and stern in respect of the 'tradition of the elders,' but it did not revise itself constantly or at all in the light of the mind of God, and therefore its moral standard became debased. It 'made void the word of God because of the tradition.' It 'tithed mint and anise and cummin, and left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgement, and mercy, and faith.' It 'strained out the gnat, and swallowed the camel[2].' It

[1] John v. 44. [2] Matt. xv. 6; xxiii. 23.

came to be almost purely external and consistent with even the grossest spiritual hypocrisy, as both St. Paul and our Lord Himself assure us. Above all, it was completely satisfied with itself. 'We have Abraham to our Father.' 'I thank thee that I am not as other men are.' That is the characteristic tone of Pharisees and of all who, however unlike them otherwise, are living by a strong social standard and priding themselves on belonging to a respectable and dignified class. This it is that St. Paul calls seeking to be justified or commended to God by 'works' or 'works of the law'—not, we must observe, 'good works,' such as are the fruit of a right disposition towards God, of which St. Paul never spoke with any disparagement.

It is the characteristic of the Pharisaic attitude that a man holds by a strict code enforced by the public opinion of his church or circle; a code which he diligently and even painfully obeys. But it is characteristic of this attitude also that it resents new light, and tacitly claims independence even of God, provided that 'the law' is kept or the accepted standard maintained. Thus the Pharisees resented the Christ, when renewing the voice of the old prophets, without respect of persons, He exposed the

moral weaknesses of these religious leaders, and bade them, in effect, begin again and think afresh what God's will really meant: when He warned them that the one unpardonable sin is to be self-satisfied in one's own eyes, and to repudiate as an impertinent intruder the fresh divine light. The story is very familiar. They resented and rejected the Christ because He made the unlimited divine claim upon them: because He spoke to them as God to the human soul, and not as the representative of 'the tradition.' 'Seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God[1].'

Now we understand what it is to seek to be justified by works. It is to have a social or ecclesiastical code, and to claim acceptance in God's sight because we perform it, meanwhile making 'the law' under which we act, believed to be divine, a substitute for the living and personal God, and resenting any fresh and immediate claim of God on the human soul.

In this mixture of subservience and independence, of religious humility and human pride, Saul of Tarsus had been brought up 'at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem.' His was not

[1] Rom. x. 3.

one of those slack consciences which enable men to take the lowest line which respectable public opinion will allow. In every ecclesiastical system the strict law comes to be mitigated by various dispensations and compensations—generally substitutions of the easier ceremonial for the harder moral requirement. But young Saul no doubt took the law in its fullest sense as the thing to be kept, with all its accompanying traditions. So taken, it constituted no doubt what St. Peter calls it[1]—an intolerable yoke. A strict Jew must have had a very difficult life of it. But it was not this yoke of specific outward requirements that staggered St. Paul. What he found crushing was the inward claim—'Thou shalt not covet[2].' He who had determined to appear before God at the last with a clear record as one who had kept the law, found himself confronted by an inner and searching claim of the divine righteousness, to which no blamelessness in outward conduct enabled him to correspond. He could not help feeling himself a sinner in the eye of God; and the sacrificial system plainly gave his conscience no relief at all. He does not even allude to it in this connexion. Meanwhile, as he moved

[1] Acts xv. 10. [2] Rom. vii. 7.

about in Jewish society of the empire at Tarsus and elsewhere, he found that it required no spiritual microscope to discover that the law in many of its plainest moral injunctions was in fact not being observed at all. He seemed to see that instead of the law being really the means of justification, it in effect put 'the righteous nation' simply in the position of condemned sinners, and himself among them, as fully as if they were simply without a divinely given law, like the 'sinners of the Gentiles.'

We know well how, when the way of God had been learnt more perfectly, this earlier moral experience of the effect of the law on himself and others worked itself out in St. Paul's mind into a deep theory of the function, not of 'the law' only, that is the Mosaic law, but of law altogether—of 'the letter' of any body of external enactments. Law, he found, could enlighten the conscience, but it could never reach deep enough to the springs of will to strengthen and purify them. God must become more intimate to man than any external law can make Him. A law of ordinances can only be a preparatory discipline, intended by the very falsity of the assumption on which it is based to teach men that they are not what they fancied themselves.

They fancied themselves beings sufficiently independent to stand on their own basis and enter into a covenant with God, to make a compact with Him to observe a law and to abide by the result. It is the function of such a compact as between independent parties to convince men that any such relation between God, the Creator and Giver, and man, the creature and simply the receiver—still more between God the Holy and man the defiled and weakened—is simply contrary to fundamental facts[1].

As yet, however, St. Paul was only rendered miserable by his experience under the law. To feel himself a sinner alienated from God was a profound humiliation to his spiritual pride. He was fired no doubt by the lofty ideal of the righteous nation, standing before God in virtue of its righteousness, of its performance of the divine law, and therefore making its claim on God to vindicate it before the whole world. He threw himself zealously into rigid observance: only, however, to find himself humiliated and perplexed.

Meanwhile, he was becoming conscious of the

[1] See the argument of Gal. iii. 15–22. 'God is one' in a sense which excludes the idea of any relatively independent contracting party over against Him.

claim of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ. Under what conditions that claim began to confront him we do not in the least know. But he must have known in the period before his conversion that the severest attack on the spiritual position of the Pharisees ever delivered had been delivered by Him who claimed to be the Christ; that the Pharisees in consequence had thrown all their influence into the rejection of His claim, and if they had not been the most direct instruments of His death, yet had encouraged and sanctioned it. Thus the more dissatisfied he became in his own conscience, the more zealous he grew for the Pharisaic position, and the more fanatical, therefore, against the followers of the crucified Jesus. At what point it began to dawn upon his conscience that perhaps Jesus was right and not the Pharisees; that perhaps it was in His teaching that his own restless heart was to find repose, we can only wonder. Some struggle such as this dawning consciousness would involve he certainly passed through. 'It was hard for him to kick against the goad[1].' At last, and at a definite moment, God 'triumphed over him' in Christ, and he gave in his alle-

[1] Acts xxvi. 14.

giance to Jesus as the Christ on the road to Damascus. Many a man has thus after a struggle surrendered to God at discretion: many a man has shown the will, as Faber calls it,

> 'to lose my will in His,
> And by that loss be free.'

But to no man can it ever have involved a completer sacrifice of his own pride and prejudice—of his own personal comfort and safety—than it did to St. Paul: and, therefore, in no man did it ever involve a vaster increase of spiritual illumination. Hitherto he had stood on the basis which his pride in his religious position gave him and, starting thence, had sought to erect the spiritual fabric of a life acceptable to God. But the more he had known of God and the more he had struggled, the less satisfied he had become. God seemed to be in no other attitude towards him than that of a dissatisfied taskmaster. Now he had surrendered at discretion into God's hands. He had no position of his own to maintain. He had put himself in God's hands. In His sight he was content to be treated as a sinner, just like one of the Gentiles—to be forgiven of His pure and unmerited love, and of His pure and unmerited love endued with a spiritual power for which

he could take no credit to himself, for it was simply a gift. Once more, he had henceforth no prejudices and recognized no limitation on what he might be required to bear or do. His life was handed over to be controlled from above.

Thus when St. Paul sets justification by faith and faith only in opposition to justification by works of the law, he is contrasting two different attitudes towards God and duty, which in the two halves of his own sharply sundered life he had himself conspicuously represented. The contrast may be expressed perhaps in four ways.

1. The man under the law of works is mainly concerned about external conduct and observances—the making clean of the outside of the cup and the platter: the man of faith is concerned almost altogether with the relation of his heart to God at the springs of action. Faith is a disposition of the heart which indeed results in a certain kind of outward conduct, but which has its value already, prior to the outward conduct, because of what it inwardly is. Faith, as Calvin said, pregnant with good works, justifies before they are brought forth. This distinction between faith and works underlies St. Paul's teaching in parts, but is never very prominent.

It accounts, however, for St. Paul's shrinking from any insistence upon outward observances in the Church, such as do not necessarily convey any spiritual meaning or power. 'Why,' he cries to the Colossians, 'do ye subject yourselves to ordinances; handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men?[1]'

2. Inasmuch as 'the law' was a national thing, so 'works of the law' were a supposed means of justification confined to Israel, and an occasion of contempt for other nations. Faith, on the other hand, the mere capacity to feel our own wants and to take God at His word, is a universal quality and belongs, or may belong, to all men. Thus justification by faith is opposed to justification by works of the law, as the universal or catholic to the merely Jewish or national, and in this aspect the contrast occupies a great place in St. Paul's thought and teaching.

3. But it is not in the things it is occupied about, or in the range of its activity, that faith is most centrally contrasted with works. It is in the attitude of man towards God which it represents. The 'worker' for justification always

[1] Col. ii. 20–22.

retains his own independence towards God. He works upon the basis of a definite covenant by which God is bound as well as himself. He has the right to resent additional claims. Faith, on the other hand, means an entire abandonment of independence. It is self-committal, self-surrender. 'I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day[1].' The man of faith throws all the responsibility for life on God, and says simply and continually, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'

It is of the utmost importance to notice that this is the only attitude of man towards God which corresponds with the ultimate facts of human nature, as science and philosophy are bound to represent them. Man is, in fact, an absolutely dependent being, physically and spiritually. His virtue must lie, not in originativeness, but in correspondence. Supposing him a free agent in God's universe, his freedom can only consist in a power to correspond with divine forces and laws intelligently and voluntarily; or on the other hand to disturb the divine order of creation in a measure by wilful-

[1] 2 Tim. i. 12.

ness and sin. Now faith is simply the faculty of loving correspondence with God. 'Justification by faith' is the only conception of justification which is possible in the light of the root facts of human nature. But of course the practical appeal of this conclusion to the heart and will is immensely increased, if men can be shown to have acted as if they were independent and to have found it a failure; if life lived in independence of God, with God as it were withdrawn from the actual scene of life to its far-off horizon, is found to have resulted in havoc, weakness and despair. So, in fact, St. Paul's doctrine of the true means of justification is based on an appeal, not so much to the ultimate constitution of our human nature as to the experienced results of our independence of God, to the facts of sin, whether among Gentiles or Jews.

4. Finally, the principle of justification by faith is contrasted with that of justification by works of the law in the view which it involves of the character of God. The law, as St. Paul interprets it, views God as a lord and taskmaster. Faith presents Him as the Father of our spirits, always waiting upon us with His eternal, unchangeable love; bearing with us;

dealing with us even on a false basis which by our sins we have forced upon Him, in order to bring us to a recognition of the true; anyway acting or withholding action, if by any means we can be won to recognize His true character and our true life.

These are the broad contrasts between the alternative methods of justification by faith or by 'works of the law.' The law, and the attitude towards God which the law suggested, are, in St. Paul's view, the main characteristic of the Old Testament. This is a point of view which we should expect in one trained by the Pharisees. We may possibly feel that St. Paul tends to identify with the Old Testament as a whole one particular element in it which specially characterized one particular period. But at least the element was there, and occupied there a highly important place in the whole development; and if St. Paul in his idealizing manner sometimes speaks as if it was the whole of the older covenant, as if he had forgotten all the teaching of prophet and psalmist, yet he is not really forgetful. Law is to him the characteristic of the old covenant. But behind the law God's dealings with Abraham are for ever in his imagination witnessing against the law's

limitation, and a similar witness is kept up all along: so that St. Paul can take out of one of the books of Moses his very central statement of the principle of faith[1].

In what has just been said justifying faith has been treated as if it were simply, as it is really, faith in God; whereas in St. Paul's language the object of justifying faith is constantly 'Jesus[2].' The explanation of this is that in Jesus Christ God has manifested His character as Father, and has come near to men, 'reconciling the world unto Himself,' by the atonement wrought through His incarnate Son, and giving conspicuous evidence of His saving power by raising Him from the dead[3]. Thus, if Jesus is the proximate object of justifying faith, it is Jesus as manifesting the Father, Jesus as God incarnate; and St. Peter is strictly interpreting St. Paul when he represents the object of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection in the phrase, 'that your faith and hope might be in God[4].' The faith of the Christian is the old faith of Abraham and Habakkuk, the faith in the Lord

[1] Rom. x. 5–8. [2] Cf. iii. 22, 26, &c.

[3] 2 Cor. v. 19; Rom. iv. 25.

[4] 1 Pet. i. 21. It is of course the case that the name God in the New Testament is *generally* reserved for the Father, though the proper divinity of Son and Spirit is constantly implied.

Jehovah only now made manifest in a new and completer manner, in a more intimate relation to human life, and with a more winning appeal to the human heart.

iii.

Now that we have gained a general idea of what St. Paul meant by justification by faith, as opposed to justification by works of law, we are in a position to deal with a number of questions which have been famous in ecclesiastical history. Does justification mean being made righteous, or being reckoned for righteous? if it means the latter, how can God reckon us as being what in fact we are not? Again, what is the relation of this justification to sanctification? are these two stages, of which the first is over before the second can begin? Again, what is the relation of justification to Church membership? is justification a purely individual process or fact, of which membership in the Church or, what comes to the same thing, reception of the sacraments, is a merely secondary and strictly unessential consequence?

The answers to these questions are all connected with one another. Justification, to begin with, is a judicial or, as it is called, 'forensic'

word. It expresses the verdict of acquittal. The use of the word in the Bible made this quite indisputable[1]. Thus God justifies whenever He refuses to condemn—when, whatever may have been our sins, He ignores them, and therefore positively admits us into the accepted people. And He declares His willingness to do this simply because a man believes in Jesus Christ. Let a man believe, or take God in Jesus Christ at His gracious word, and the value of this act of trust or allegiance is such that God reckons it for righteousness, and admits a man into the accepted people, as if he were already fit for such fellowship in his actual habits or character. There is 'imputation' here, but it is the right sort of imputation. It is dealing with us not as we are, nor exactly as we are not, but as we are becoming in virtue of a new attachment under which our life has passed: and this, as the engrossing modern conception of development makes it easy for us to perceive, is the only true and profound way of regarding anything. Not the standard already reached, but the movement, direction, or vitality is the important matter. Faith, then, is 'reckoned for righteousness' because it puts us upon the right

[1] See below, p. 124.

basis and in the right relation to God; and therefore is a root out of which, provided it continues to subsist, all righteousness can healthily grow; whereas the most brilliant efforts or 'works' on a wrong basis may have neither sound root nor principle of progress in them. To believe in Jesus is to have the root of the matter in oneself. Therefore, when a man first believes, God can ignore all his previous life, and deal with him simply on the new basis, in hope. Of course this preliminary acquittal or acceptance is provisional. As the servant[1] who had been forgiven his debts found them rolled back upon him when he behaved in a manner utterly inconsistent with the position of a forgiven man, so our preliminary justification may be promptly cancelled by our future conduct if we behave as one who has 'forgotten the cleansing from his old sins[2].' The prodigal son, after he has been welcomed home, may go back again to the 'far country.' But it remains the fact:—of such infinite value and fruitfulness is faith in God, as He has shown Himself in Jesus, that when a man first believes—aye, whenever, over and over again, he returns to believe—he is in God's sight on a new basis, however dark be the back-

[1] Matt. xviii. 23–35. [2] 2 Pet. i. 9.

ground of his previous sins; and he can be dealt with simply on the new basis, according to the movement of the Father's heart of love which his faith has set free.

Now the justifying faith of the conscience-stricken sinner, whose case St. Paul always has in the foreground of his imagination, means first of all and most obviously that he consciously takes God at His word as being ready to forgive his sins, and accept him for Jesus' sake in whom he believes. It is belief in God as forgiving, or in Jesus as—he does not stop to inquire how—obtaining and giving him forgiveness. And St. Paul laid great stress on this simple acceptance of the gift of pardon, as the gate of the new life and the first act of faith, because the readiness to be treated as a sinner and merely forgiven in spite of our sins is, as he knew full well in his own case, the final overthrow of spiritual pride. But this simple 'reliance on the merits of Christ,' and acceptance of forgiveness at His hands and for His sake, is a profound movement of the heart—of the spring of human actions—which involves much more than appears. Luther was hopelessly wrong and unlike St. Paul when he isolated this mere reliance on another's merits, and, setting it apart from all

deeper movement of will or love, would have it, and it only, concerned with our justification. To St. Paul even the first movement of faith is a surrender of independence, and a recognition in intellect, and much more in will, of the lordship of Jesus. It is, in other words, a change of allegiance, and this is the important thing about it. And the absolved man, in thanking God for his forgiveness, finds himself, as it were, inevitably and without any fresh act, embarked on a new service. If he does not find this, he is not a man of faith at all. Faith is so deep a principle that, though it shows itself first as the mere acceptance of an undeserved boon from the divine bounty, it involves such hanging upon God as necessarily enlists the will to choose and serve Him, the intellect to know and worship Him with a growing perception as He is revealed in Jesus, and the affections to desire and love Him. The life of justification thus proceeds 'from faith to faith' —from faith in Christ 'for us' to faith in Christ 'in us.' The justified man, accepted into the 'body of Christ' by baptism and made a participator of the life of Christ, receives the continual gifts of the divine bounty in their appointed channels, and his faith exercising its natural

faculty of correspondence, absorbs and appropriates the divine gifts—intellectually, so that the eyes of the understanding are opened in increasing knowledge—practically, so that 'Christ dwells in the heart by faith,' and it is no longer the bare human self which lives, but Christ which lives in the renewed man, with a continual display of moral power.

The first justification or acceptance is therefore a preliminary step: it is acceptance for admission into the divine household, or city of God, or life in Christ. It is a means to an end, and that end the fellowship of Christ, and continually developing assimilation to Him. Does this mean, then, that justification and sanctification are processes following the one on the other, of which the former is over before the latter begins? Such a statement must be repudiated so far as its latter clause is concerned. You cannot thus logically sever a vital process. They are two parts of one vital process; and the man who is not *on the way* to being made like Christ (however far off it he may be at the moment) is by that very fact shown to be not in a state of justification or acceptance with God. At any stage of spiritual life there must be movement in order to make forgiveness pos-

sible. Grant this however and it becomes true that justification, as meaning acquittal, is a preliminary to sanctification, that is, the being made like Christ. The having our 'heart set at liberty' is a preliminary to 'running the way of God's commandments.' But even so we must recognize that St. Paul never exactly uses this language. When he describes the stages of God's dealings with the soul he passes from justification to glorification, or (final) deliverance from sin and wrath[1]. Or, on one occasion, he mentions sanctification before justification[2].

This is in part accounted for by the fact that the word translated 'sanctify' or 'sanctification' means rather 'consecrate' (as to priesthood) or 'consecration.' And though this consecration involves 'sanctity' (in our sense) because of the character of God to whom we are dedicated, yet it may precede it; and we are in fact consecrated and hallowed at the moment when we are accepted into the 'priestly body' and anointed with the divine unction[3]. This exact meaning of the term sanctification in part accounts for St. Paul not speaking of sanctification and justification as successive stages of the spiritual life. When he

[1] Rom. v. 9–11. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 11.

[3] Cf. Hort, *First Ep. of Peter* (Macmillan, 1898), p. 70.

is speaking about justification he is answering the question, What is the attitude of the human soul towards God which sets God free, so to speak, to accept it and work upon it? And the answer is, The attitude of faith. When he speaks of sanctification, or rather consecration, he is answering the implied question, How is the individual to be thought of when he has been admitted by baptism into the Christian community? And the answer is, He is to be thought of as consecrated, or as sharing the life of a consecrated people[1]. St. Paul's language in one place would suggest that if 'justification' qualifies for admission into the life in Christ, the result of this admission is again a justification, not now merely of our persons, but of our whole moral being—a 'justification of life[2].' But this is, at least, not his usual use of the word.

And now we approach the question of the relation of our individual justification to membership in the Church and all that goes with that. To put the question in a rough controversial way—Is the Epistle to the Romans, as it has been

[1] It is noticeable that St. Paul never uses the verb translated 'to be sanctified' of persons in the present tense. It always describes an already existing state rather than a process.

[2] Rom. v. 18, but cf. later, p. 202.

frequently held to be, a thoroughly Protestant work?

The Prophet Ezekiel first clearly discerned and expressed the truth that the new covenant of God with man must be based upon the conversion of individual wills and hearts. So it was realized. The basis of the Church was a profound movement of individual faith and love and allegiance, in the apostles and first disciples. And that on which it is based is that by which it must progress—the real assent and correspondence of individual wills and hearts. They that receive the testimony must set to their seals that God is true. Thus one cannot possibly exaggerate the importance in Christianity of the individual spiritual life, or of individual conversion and faith, if he does not isolate it. He cannot possibly exaggerate the stress laid in the Epistle to the Romans on individual faith and its results, if he does not forget its context. But what is meant by this proviso? This simply. St. Paul, in his doctrine of justification by faith, is describing the basis of the new covenant of God with man which is, as truly as the old, a covenant with a community, an Israel of God. The faith which justifies, therefore, means the faith which qualifies for the community as truly

as it admits into the favour of God. The very evidence that God accepts the first movement of faith is that the believing man is admitted by baptism into the body of Christ. The idea of a faith in Jesus which does not seek admission into 'the body,' or disparages it even while it accepts it, does not even present itself to St. Paul's mind. A faith which is content to remain outside Christ is no faith at all, and the act of being 'baptized into Christ' is an act by which 'in one spirit we are baptized into one body.' Again, the conception impressed upon the institution of the Eucharist is that Christ's atoning sacrifice is the basis of a new covenant with a society which is to share His life[1].

Elsewhere St. Paul expresses this by saying that what Christ bought for Himself was a Church, a new Israel[2]. What His sacrifice purchased was a new *community*. There is the less necessity to insist upon this truth because it is now being very generally perceived. The most powerful influence in recent German Protestant theology is that of Albrecht Ritschl, and through him the truth has come back, through unexpected channels, that the object

[1] Hort, l. c., p. 24.

[2] Eph. v. 25; Tit. ii. 14; cf. Acts xx. 28.

of the sacrificial death of Christ, and therefore of the divine justification, is not the individual but the Church[1]; or, if we may venture to modify the phrase, the object of divine justification is the individual only as becoming and remaining (so far as His will is concerned) a member of the Church. In fact, 'justification' may be rendered, without any false idea being attached to it, 'acceptance for membership in the sacred people, the Israel of God.' And where any one has become a member of the Church without even the rudimentary faith which can render him acceptable in God's sight, there the awakening of such faith is the condition of profitable or 'saving' membership.

From this point of view it is not difficult to see the relation of our epistle, broadly, to Protestantism and Catholicism. Protestantism was a reaction against one-sided ecclesiasticism. The Church is the household of God, the home of His people. She guides and disciplines their souls. She feeds them with the bread of life. But her representatives may suffer her to lose the spiritual characteristics of the new covenant

[1] Ritschl, *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, ii. p. 217 ff. Cf. S. & H., p. 122; and Orr, *Ritschlian Theology* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1898) p. 169 ff.

and fall back upon those of the old. She may come to be characterized by a mere authoritativeness. The spirit of 'the law of ordinances' may come to prevail again. The sacraments may be treated as charms; or, in other words, all moral and spiritual requirement may be summed up in mere obedience, or in doing this and that. So, in fact, it happened to a great extent in the popular mediaeval system; and Protestantism was a reaction. It was a reaction based on truth, as Luther seemed to himself to re-discover it in the epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. But the reaction broke up the communion of Christians. It thus impaired the sense of the one body, and very often resulted in obliterating the perception of any obligation to the visible body of Christ at all. It became individualist, and disparaged the sacraments which are at once both the outward means of union with Christ and the bonds of cohesion for His body, the Church. But as we now look back upon the matter, we can see as clearly as it is possible to see anything, that both mediaeval Catholicism and Lutheran Protestantism (or modern English Protestantism) represent one-sided developments in which thoughtful men cannot permanently acquiesce. The preliminary justifying

faith of the individual does but warrant his admission into the body of Christ, the divine society, by baptism. And once admitted into the body, and instructed in her tradition, faith finds its function intellectually in meditating upon and appropriating the full meaning of the mystery of God, and spiritually in appropriating and digesting the powers of that divine and human life into which baptism admits us, and in which the sacramental feast and sacrifice continually makes us anew participators. The Church with its sacramental gifts, and the personal faith of the converted heart, are no more to be set in antithesis than food and digestion, or the 'virtue which went out of Christ' and the faith in Him which made men whole. The sacraments certainly do not save us without conversion and faith, and faith which leaves us voluntarily isolated from the visible communion of the one body is not what St. Paul meant by 'justifying faith.'

'Ah, yet consider it again!' is what we are continually tempted to exclaim to some of our modern controversialists who appear to be still repeating the watchwords of the sixteenth century. For in fact the famous controversial positions of the period of the Reformation were

intensely one-sided, and have been antiquated by completer and maturer study—not least in the matter of justification.

Thus Calvin's position on the subject was based upon and permeated by a conception of God as predestinating and creating and internally constraining some men to eternal life, and equally predestinating and creating and abandoning other men, without possibility of recovery, to eternal misery. Such a conception is utterly abhorrent to modern consciences: and we shall have occasion to observe with how little reason any conception of God predestinating man to eternal misery has been attributed to St. Paul[1].

Luther again, who identified himself, as no other teacher has ever done, with St. Paul's epistles of justification, was so zealous to separate the faith in virtue of which God justifies us from all idea of merit, that he represented it as a bare acceptance of the divine offer without any moral quality at all—a bare believing ourselves to be saved, without any moral reason in it. Thus, accepting an existing scholastic distinction between an 'informed' faith, i.e. a faith ensouled

[1] The subject comes forward especially in connexion with chapters ix-xi.

by love, and a 'formless' or bare faith, he held the faith on account of which God justifies us to be rigidly of the formless kind; and while fully recognizing the richer sort of faith as the God-given quality of those already justified, declared that it had nothing to do with their justification. But this conception of two separate sorts of faith, of which only the loveless sort, that involves no moral worth, has to do with our acceptance with God, is not only a high road to moral laxity or antinomianism, but is also utterly alien to the spirit of St. Paul, in whom the whole life of faith is one and continuous[1]. It could only have arisen at a particular moment of theological controversy which is past and gone. And the same must be said of the allied doctrine of the total depravity of our fallen nature, which drove men to violent misinterpretations alike of scripture and of their moral instincts.

And what of the Tridentine theology? No doubt in its general view of our fallen human nature it is far more reasonable and Pauline than the Lutheran; and it is also truer to St. Paul in laying the main stress on a divine righteousness

[1] I know that any brief statement about Luther's doctrine may be disputed, for his own statements vary considerably. But I think the tendency of his teaching is fairly represented above.

actually imparted to us, and not on Christ's merits imputed and not imparted; or, in other words, in recognizing that forgiveness is only a prelude to the development of a new life of holiness. But on the other hand it puts itself hopelessly out of relation to St. Paul's language and thought by interpreting justification as the being *made* righteous, and accordingly speaking of baptism as the instrument by which we are justified, whereas to St. Paul justification means our preliminary acceptance without regard to what we have been, and the initial faith which enables men to be thus accepted would normally, in those he is thinking about, have preceded baptism, as in his own case, or that of Cornelius, or of the eunuch. Who can doubt that the faith of St. Paul's conversion is what enabled God to accept him, though it remained for him, as for other men, to 'wash away his sins' by being 'baptized into Christ[1]?'

May we not truly say that deeper and maturer study of St. Paul has for us undercut and antiquated the theological standing-grounds of the

[1] 'Acceptance' is already acquittal; but only in view of the new life of the body of Christ which is to emancipate man from the power of sin. Thus it is only as incorporated into Christ that he finds his former sin 'put away.' 'I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins.'

sixteenth century, and substituted for them something both truer, completer, and freer?

iv.

It only remains to make more emphatic what has been already suggested, that the Pauline doctrine of justification is of much more than antiquarian interest. We do not, as has been already shown, get rid of the 'danger of thinking to be saved by works' because we are not, like the Pharisees, abandoned to ecclesiastical observances. All moral codes or standards, sanctioned by a society or class and involving no more than a limited liability, come under the moral category of 'works of a law.' They all are apt to leave men as independent of God as the Pharisees, and as resentful of the fuller light. The late Master of Balliol expresses a characteristic opinion that the notions of 'legal righteousness,' or of 'the pride of human nature,' or 'the tendency to rebel against the will of God, or to attach an undue value to good works[1],' are 'fictions as applied to our own time[2].' But

[1] He should say, if he would represent St. Paul, 'works,' not 'good works.'

[2] Essay on 'Righteousness by Faith,' in *Epistles of St. Paul* (Murray, 1894), vol. ii. p. 264. The whole essay is very characteristic and very interesting, but not very Pauline.

this is surely lamentably untrue. Men all round us dread the idea of committing themselves to God. They do not know how far it will carry them. They are like would-be soldiers who should refuse to enlist till they had had some assurance as to the extremest risk that their service might involve. Thus, because they cannot get this assurance, they will make no beginning of the life of real faith. They live by a limited code which retains their independence for them. If they are also ecclesiastically minded, the 'legal righteousness' always involved in this sort of morality becomes even outwardly more like that of the Pharisees, and it is not very uncommon among churchmen. But the whole habit of mind, inside or outside the area of professed churchmanship, has its root in what is properly and profoundly human pride and the false clinging to independence of God. This 'pride of life' seems to be almost more dangerous and, in fact, disastrous than even 'the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes.' Thus if we can only get St. Paul's doctrine of the necessity of faith rightly understood, there is no teaching more necessary for these times.

And, on the other hand, where men are really ready to follow the light and do God's will, they

need—they need exceedingly for the good of the whole body—to realize St. Paul's teaching about justification, that is, about God's constant attitude towards men, in order to obtain that peace which is meant to be, not the far-off goal of Christian life, but its basis and foundation. When a person is continuously apprehensive and excited about his spiritual state, he is not in the temper of mind in which he can best serve God or work out his own or other men's salvation. 'Peace must go before as well as follow after; a peace, too, not to be found in the necessity of law (as philosophy has sometimes held), but in the sense of the love of God to His creatures. He has no right to this peace, and yet he has it.' In these words of the same writer whom we just now were obliged to criticize we may find a simple expression of the truth. 'Wherefore, being accepted of God simply because we take Him at His word, let us have and hold peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ[1].' Then we can throw ourselves without embarrassments into the life of love and sacrifice, the life which has the love of God in Christ for its motive, and reflects it among men.

No doubt we must admit that St. Paul's

[1] Rom. v. 1.

doctrine of justification has not been generally appreciated in the Church—the fact is strange, but it is indisputable. No doubt also we must admit that those who have chiefly been identified with it have often even disastrously distorted it. No doubt, as a result both of this neglect and of this distortion, the ordinary religious Englishman of the present day is disposed to pass it by as having little meaning for him. Nevertheless it remains true that no revival of religion can ever attain to any ripeness or richness unless this central doctrine of St. Paul's gospel resumes its central place with us also. For, as St. Paul preached it, it means this above all else—personal devotion to Jesus Christ as our redeemer. This personal devotion begins by accepting from Him the unmerited boon of forgiveness of our sins, and (what is only the other side of such forgiveness) inheritance in the consecrated body. But the consciousness of what we have received from Christ, and the price it cost Him to put it at our disposal, gives to the whole subsequent life the character of a devotion based on gratitude. This is the Christian life according to St. Paul—personal devotion to Christ and personal service based on gratitude for what He has done for us. 'For the love of Christ

constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.'

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Chapter I. 1–7.

Salutation.

It was the custom in the days of the Romans to begin a letter with a brief indication from whom it came and to whom it was addressed, in the form of a complimentary salutation, thus—to take an example from the New Testament—'Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting[1].' We are familiar in our day with the like forms for beginning and ending letters, serving the same purpose and generally no other. St. Paul then accepts the epistolary form of his day, but pours into it an increasing wealth of personal meaning[2]. Thus in this place the necessary address—'Paul the apostle

[1] Acts xxiii. 26.

[2] The salutation of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, the earliest epistle, is the most nearly formal. Those to the Romans and to Titus are the fullest and richest.

to the believers in Jesus Christ which are in Rome, greeting'—is expanded into a salutation extraordinarily full of meaning, explaining (1) who it is who writes the letter; (2) with what justification; (3) to whom; and (4) with what greeting.

(1) It is Paul who is writing, and he describes himself both personally and officially. Personally, since the day when he surrendered himself on the road to Damascus, he has been 'the slave of Jesus Christ,' bound in all things to do His will, and exulting all the time in the moral liberty which that bondage gave him. Officially, he has received a commission and an office equal to that of the older apostles in the kingdom of Christ: he has been 'called to be an apostle, separated to proclaim the good tidings of God.'

(2) It is then this glorious commission that justifies his writing. These good tidings of God are the fulfilment of an age-long promise for which the world had been waiting. Of ancient days there were 'prophets,' men commissioned to speak for God, whose writings remained after them and are held in highest reverence as 'holy scriptures.' These men foretold good days from God that were to come to His people in the

coming of the divinely anointed king, the Christ. And now they are come. God has sent to redeem men not a servant, but His own Son. True, He came as man among men: as one of the royal house of David, the house from which the Christ was promised; yet simply man in outward nature and appearance, or 'according to the flesh.' But besides that ordinary seeming manhood, there was in Him something higher—a sacred spiritual nature. And this higher nature it was that finally determined the estimate in which He was to be held. If 'according to the flesh' He was a man of David's house, according to this 'spirit of holiness' He was decisively designated by God's own act as Son of God in miraculous power, and that especially when He was made the example of a resurrection from the dead. Thenceforth 'Jesus' of Nazareth is 'Christ' and 'the Lord' of Christians. It is He through whom St. Paul and his fellows received the outpouring of the divine bounty for their own lives, and their apostolic commission on behalf of the name of Christ to bring all the nations of the earth to the obedience of faith. And this commission extends as far as the Roman Christians and justifies St. Paul in writing to them.

(3) To all the Christians at Rome, then, 'called to be saints,' i. e. called into the consecrated body and to the consecrated life, St. Paul is writing. He does not say 'to the church which is at Rome,' as in the other epistles of this date he writes 'to the church at Corinth' and to 'the churches of Galatia.' And though this might be accidental, yet probably it is due to the fact that St. Paul thought of the Roman Christians as individuals who, many of them, had been converted elsewhere and for various reasons had come to be living at Rome; so that in fact they had hardly yet attained the consistency of a single ordered church.

(4) And to these Christians he gives his greeting by wishing for them those gifts which may be taken as summing up the blessings of Christ about which this epistle is to say so much—'grace,' which is God's love to us in actual operation, and 'peace,' which is the state of mind of one who realizes God's love—from the Father and the Son. This benediction is, however, but a Christian form of that of Aaron, 'The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace[1].'

[1] Num. vi. 25, 26; see Hort, *First Ep. of Peter*, p. 25.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead; *even* Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake: among whom are ye also, called *to be* Jesus Christ's: to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is, I believe, nothing in the above analysis which is not implied at least in the original language of this salutation. And it is a remarkable summary of the grounds of St. Paul's Christian belief, more exact and explicit than the 'Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel[1].' There are some points in it which require further notice:—

1. The use of 'spirit of holiness' in connexion with Christ (in ver. 4). Here it is put in antithesis to 'the flesh,' i. e. Christ as He appeared to the outward eye in His natural manhood; and describes, vaguely and without further definition, the higher nature of which, behind

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 8.

His visible manhood, men became conscious[1]. Elsewhere 'spirit' is more exactly used to describe (1) the human spirit in us or in Christ[2]; (2) disembodied persons or angels or devils[3]; (3) the Holy Ghost[4]; (4) the being of God[5]; (5) generally what has will and consciousness, as opposed to the merely external, the 'flesh' or the 'letter[6].' Sometimes, as in 2 Cor. iii. 17, it is hard to feel sure about the exact shade of meaning.

2. We have here, in a very brief compass, St. Paul's conception of 'Christian evidences.' He begins from Christ, 'according to the flesh.' 'And why,' asks Chrysostom, 'did he not begin from the higher side? Because Matthew also, Luke and Mark, begin from the lower. One who would lead others upwards must begin from below. And this was in fact the divine method. First they saw Him (Christ) as man on the earth, and then perceived Him to be God.' It was, in other words, through the

[1] Cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'justified in the spirit,' where the use is approximately the same.

[2] See 1 Thess. v. 23; 1 Cor. v. 5; James ii. 26; Matt. v. 3; xxvi. 41; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Mark viii. 12.

[3] Luke xxiv. 39; Heb. xii. 23; i. 14; Matt. viii. 16, &c.

[4] Matt. iii. 16; Luke x. 21, R.V. &c.

[5] John iv. 24.

[6] John vi. 63; Rom. ii. 29; 2 Cor. iii. 6.

experience of His manhood that they arrived at His Godhead. And the evidence of His divine sonship was in part miraculous; but it was not mere miracle. It was miracle 'according to a spirit of holiness.' It was miracle filled with spiritual and moral meaning. It was a resurrection vindicating perfect righteousness.

3. The phrase 'the resurrection of the dead' is translated more exactly by Wiclif 'agen-risynge of dead *men*.' Christ's resurrection is the great example of what is to be general.

4. The obedience of faith exactly describes the human faculty as it showed itself in St. Paul himself at his conversion. With him to believe was, without any possibility of question, to obey Him whom he believed, and St. Paul knows no faith which does not involve a like obedience; cf. xv. 18; xvi. 26; 1 Pet. i. 2.

Chapter I. 8-17.

St. Paul's introduction.

The salutation is immediately followed by a passage in which St. Paul introduces himself specially to the Christians at Rome. He had a delicate task to perform. The Roman Christians had been gathered probably from many parts of the empire, because Rome was the centre of all the world's movements, and adherents of whatever was going on in the empire were sure by force of circumstances to find their way to Rome. Thus, though no apostle had yet preached at Rome, Christians had gathered there. Many of them had not seen St. Paul's face. But they had heard of him, no doubt, in Jewish circles as a very dangerous man who was upheaving and subverting established traditions and principles. He was a man to be looked at askance. He must introduce himself therefore carefully. It was of the greatest importance

to him, the Apostle of the Gentiles, that he should gain full recognition among these Christians at Rome, the centre of the Gentile world. We observe then in this introduction what a gentleman, if I may say so, in the very deepest sense of the term, St. Paul shows himself to be. He speaks indeed with an admirable mixture of tact and candour. We can hardly conceive any better address in a delicate situation than this address of St. Paul with which he makes his approach to the Roman Christians.

He begins with what is pleasant for them to hear, namely, that the report of their faith throughout all the world is a good one. 'I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.' Then he goes on to add, as is usual in his introductions, that he continually prays for them. It was a remark of General Gordon's that it makes a great difference in our feeling towards a stranger if before we meet him we have prayed for him. And we may with equal truth say that it makes a great difference in the feelings of others towards us if they have reason to believe that we have prayed for them. St. Paul therefore gives himself this advantage. He says, 'God is my witness, whom I worship in my

spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers.' Then he goes on to tell them that he not only prays for their welfare, but prays that he may have the advantage of seeing them face to face and knowing them. And here he puts his desire to see them on the true ground. He wants to visit them because he has something of the utmost value to give them—that he may 'impart unto them some spiritual gift.'

Whatever may be the exact nature of the 'spiritual gift' St. Paul is thinking of, it is clearly something for which his bodily presence is necessary. There is some divine power which he as an apostle can communicate to them only when he comes among them. In this sense he means that 'when he comes to them he will come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ[1].' He implies that the Roman Christians needed him and must wait for him to supply their deficiencies. But we observe that with beautiful tact he at once balances this assertion of a divine power entrusted to him for their good, by representing his own need of them. He does not speak *de haut en bas* as if he had everything to give and nothing to receive.

[1] Rom. xv. 29.

No: as the people depend on the apostle for spiritual gifts, so he depends on the people for spiritual encouragement. He must live by the experience of their spiritual growth. 'I desire,' he says, 'to come to you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established' (built up and made strong in the faith). And then he interprets:—that is 'in order that I with you may be encouraged[1] among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.'

Then he goes on to tell them why he in particular is bound to come to them, though hitherto he had been hindered by circumstances. It is because he is 'a debtor.' St. Paul was the Apostle, not of the Jews, but of the Gentiles. Therefore he is in debt to all the Gentiles till he has given them the gospel, and more particularly to the centre of the Gentile world, to Rome. And he would owe no man anything. He would have no unsatisfied creditors. He will pay his debt therefore to the Roman Christians. 'I am a debtor,' he says, 'both to Greeks and to barbarians'—that is to all the Gentiles, whether they were of Greek race or not. And

[1] 'To encourage' and 'encouragement' are probably the best words to translate what in our Bible is rendered by 'comfort.'

the Greeks were so identified with civilization or education that this leads him on to say, 'I am a debtor both to the educated and to the uneducated.' This general debt includes Rome. It was natural to include the dwellers at Rome under the head of Greeks, for it was through the medium of Greek that St. Paul made his appeal to them. And, in fact, the Christians at Rome were, for the first two hundred and fifty years or more of the Church's life, a Greek-speaking people—a Greek colony in the Latin city. Only towards the end of the third century did the Roman Church become latinized in language and spirit. St. Paul then is a debtor to these Greek-speaking dwellers at Rome. 'So as much as in me is I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.'

But the name of Rome was, as he thought of it, a name of awe. It brought in upon his mind the tremendous undertaking that lay before him and before the Christian Church as they found themselves confronted with this vast imperial organization, which might at any time lay its iron hand upon them to stop their progress. Therefore he adds that, even in view of Rome, he has courage in his heart: 'for I am not ashamed of the gospel,' even under the shadow

of the mighty name, and though it was 'to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness.' And why? Because he knows what the gospel means. It is not mere words; it is a power. It is a 'power of God,' a divine force, which, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth, and which nothing can stop. It is a power of God. It is a power of God 'unto salvation,' a power that is to work men's deliverance, and that in the deepest sense. Roman emperors not very long after St. Paul's time are commemorated in public inscriptions as 'saviours of the world[1].' That is in the sense of maintaining peace and civil order. But Christ's salvation was of a deeper sort. It was salvation from the bondage of sin, a salvation which enabled people to be truly and eternally free. It is a power of God unto salvation, and that 'to every one that believeth,' on the mere basis of the simple willingness to take God at His word; 'to the Jew first and also to the Greek.' 'For'—and here St. Paul reaches the great text of his whole epistle—'therein' (that is, in the gospel) 'is disclosed,' or revealed here and now in the world,

[1] Hadrian and Trajan: see *C. I. G.* vol. ii. p. 1068, No. 2349 m.; vol. iii. p. 170, No. 4339, p. 191, No. 4380. These references I owe to Mr. H. W. B. Joseph, of New College.

'a righteousness of God.' By this phrase it will appear that he means both a righteousness which is God's own, and also a righteousness which God gives to men; for the gift of God is real moral and spiritual fellowship with His own life. This is what is now offered to men. A righteousness of God is revealed, starting from faith and at every stage moving on upon the support of faith, 'a righteousness of God by faith unto faith'; and that not in repudiation of the old covenant, but in fulfilment of its vital principle: 'as it is written.' For the words of Habakkuk may be interpreted to express the central spirit of the Old Testament — 'the righteous shall live by faith[1].'

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even

[1] Hab. ii. 4; cf. app. note A on meanings of the word 'faith.'

as in the rest of the Gentiles. I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.

1. Origen's comment on the words 'through Jesus Christ' (at the beginning of this section) is very interesting. 'To give God thanks is to offer a sacrifice of praise, and therefore he adds "through Jesus Christ," as through the great high priest.' Indeed, the doctrine of the high priesthood of Christ, if it is not mentioned in St. Paul's own epistles, is implied there from the first.

2. St. Paul, we notice, expresses his intention to come to Rome with reserve, 'if by any means by the will of God' . . . 'so much as lies in me.' And this reserve was no matter of mere words. He was going up to Jerusalem with an offering of money, about which he felt the greatest anxiety, and he knew not how he would be received, or what would befall him[1].

3. It is not possible to decide what sort of

[1] Rom. xv. 25 ff.; Acts xx. 22.

'spiritual gift' St. Paul is thinking of. We know that as an apostle he was qualified to impart the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and that certain 'gifts' frequently accompanied His inward presence. Thus, 'when Paul had laid his hands upon some men at Ephesus, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.' We know, further, that the Corinthian Church, whence St. Paul was writing this letter, was specially rich in 'spiritual gifts,' such as 'tongues and prophecy.' On the other hand, the Roman Christians had not yet received an apostolic visit and they may have been lacking in such endowments, while the reception of them would be calculated to encourage them and strengthen their faith.

It is possible, therefore, that he refers to a gift of this kind, and the exact language he uses certainly suggests some definite endowment, for the bestowal of which his bodily presence was necessary. The thought of the miraculous power working through him, 'the power of signs and wonders, the power of the Holy Ghost[1],' was not far from his mind when he wrote this epistle.

Origen's comment on this passage also is

[1] Rom. xv. 19.

interesting. 'First of all we ought to learn that it is an apostolic work to long to see our brethren, but for no other reason than that we may confer on them something in the way of a spiritual gift if we can, and if we cannot, that we may receive in the same kind from them. Otherwise, the longing to go about among the brethren is not to be approved.'

We cannot doubt, I think, that when St. Paul's letter was read at Rome this introduction, so full of tact, would have given him access to many hearts inclined at starting to be prejudiced against him.

DIVISION I. (Chapters I. 18—III. 20.)

The universality of sin and condemnation.

St. Paul has enunciated his great thesis. There has arrived into the world a new and divine force making for man's fullest salvation: the disclosure of a real fellowship in the moral being of God, which is open to all men, Jew and Gentile equally, on the simple terms of taking God at His word. This word of good tidings St. Paul is to expand and justify in his epistle; but first he must pause and explain its antecedents. Why was such a disclosure needed at this moment of the world's history? Why has St. Paul spoken of 'salvation,' or why does he elsewhere speak of 'redemption,' instead of expressing such ideas as are most popular among ourselves to-day—development or progress? It is because, to St. Paul's mind, man as he is is held in a bondage which he ought to find intolerable, and the first step to freedom lies in the recognition of this. Again, why does St. Paul

lay such emphasis on faith, mere faith, only faith—why is he to insist so zealously on the exclusion of any merit or independent power on man's part? It is not only because faith, the faculty of mere reception and correspondence, represents the normal and rational relation of man to God, his Creator, Sustainer, Father. It is also, and with special emphasis, because there has been a great revolt, a great assertion of false independence on man's part; and what is needed first of all is the submission of the rebel, or much rather the return of the prodigal son, simply to throw himself on the mercy of his Father and acknowledge his utter dependence upon Him for the forgiveness of his disloyalty and his outrages, as well as for the fellowship which he seeks in the divine life. The fuller statement therefore of St. Paul's gospel must be postponed to the uncloaking of what man is without it. The note of severity must be struck before the message of joy. We must be brought to acknowledge ourselves to be not men only, but corrupt men—men under the divine wrath—doomed men powerless to deliver ourselves, and ready therefore to welcome in simple gratitude the large offer of God's liberal and almost unconditional love.

It is to produce this acknowledgement that St. Paul now addresses himself. This argument of the first part of the epistle is a very simple one. It elucidates two plain propositions:—

1. that the wrath of God is, and is necessarily according to eternal and unalterable principles of moral government, and in the case of every man without any possibility of exception, upon sin.

2. that all men, Jews and Gentiles, are held in sin, and therefore lie under the divine wrath.

Thus St. Paul immediately follows up his initial statement of the revelation of a divine righteousness with the assertion of another 'revelation' made plain to the consciences of men. 'The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,' and he proceeds to demonstrate the prevalence of sin first of all in the heathen world and to lay bare its meaning.

DIVISION I. § 1. (CHAPTER I. 18-32).

Judgement on the Gentile world.

BEFORE we read this passage certain points should be plain to our minds.

1. By sin St. Paul means essentially wilfulness—wilful disobedience. There is such a thing as an inheritance of moral weakness or perversity which passes to men without their fault and without their knowledge. This, the real existence of which hardly any one can deny, is what is called original sin; and later on we shall find St. Paul speaking of it. But it is not what is most properly called sin. God is absolutely equitable. 'Sin is not reckoned' as sin in His sight, apart from knowledge and will. Sin, most properly speaking, begins and ends where wilful disobedience begins and ends. St. Paul on this matter is completely at one with St. John

when he makes sin and lawlessness identical as realities in the world. 'Sin is lawlessness[1].' And we cannot even make a beginning of advance along St. Paul's line of thought till we recognize the real existence of sin as something different in kind from ignorance or weakness or lack of development, and as an incomparably greater evil than those. Sin is the created will setting itself against the divine will. It is, as a state or an act, the refusal of God. And the recognition of the awful existence of this refusal of God is the main clue to understanding the miseries of the present world.

2. Sin therefore, involving as it does *wilful* disobedience, can only be spoken of as prevalent over the heathen world because, not merely one chosen race, but all men in general have had the opportunity of the knowledge of God. St. Paul indeed elsewhere modifies the general assertion of the fact which he makes in this place, by broadly recognizing that there are states of human existence which are low in their moral standard, but are rendered comparatively guiltless by the absence of moral knowledge—states of life where sin exists but is not reckoned

[1] 1 John iii. 4. The Greek phrase implies exactly that all sin is lawlessness, and all lawlessness is sin.

as sin [1]. For 'sin,' he says, 'is not reckoned' as sin where there is no enlightening law and no consequent condemnation of conscience. But in this passage, looking at humanity in general, he asserts, like the author of the Book of Wisdom or the perhaps contemporary Jewish author of the Apocalypse of Baruch [2], that all men have had the opportunity of knowing God from His works in nature, and that their present state is the result of a wilful refusal of Him. They are 'without excuse.' The sources of the natural knowledge of God are indeed twofold, for there is the moral conscience, individual and social, of which St. Paul speaks later; but here it is the evidence of nature alone of which St. Paul speaks: the witness of the creatures to 'the

[1] Rom. v. 13, 14.

[2] Cf. Wisd. xiii. 1-9: 'For verily all men by nature were but vain who had no perception of God, and from the good things that are seen they gained not power to know him that is, neither by giving heed to the works did they recognize the artificer. . . . For from the greatness of the beauty even of created things in like proportion does man form the image of their first maker. . . . But again even they are not to be excused. For if they had power to know so much . . . how is it that they did not sooner find the Sovereign Lord of these his works?' Apoc. Bar. liv. 17, 18: 'From time to time ye have rejected the understanding of the Most High. For his works have not taught you, nor has the skill of his creation which is at all times persuaded you.'

invisible things' or attributes of their creator, that is to say, to His power and (generally) His divinity.

3. Assuming then the opportunity of the knowledge of God as lying behind human records, St. Paul traces the history of sin. It had its roots in the refusal of the human will to recognize God and give Him the homage of gratitude and service due to Him. Men 'held down the truth in unrighteousness,' that is, restrained it from having free course in their hearts and in the world because of the painful moral obligations which it involves. Knowing God, they refused to acknowledge Him with thankfulness or 'give Him the glory.' Rather they would themselves 'be as gods.' They 'refused to have God in their knowledge.' Then from this root in the rebel will sin passed to the obscuring of the understanding, as is shown in the ridiculous aberrations of idolatry. 'They became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise,' the nations in their worship showed themselves fools. Idolatry had long ago appeared simply ridiculous to Isaiah: he pointed the finger of scorn at the idolaters. 'They know not,' he cried, 'neither do they

consider: the Lord hath shut their eyes that they cannot see, and their hearts that they cannot understand. And none calleth to mind, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of the wood in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand[1]?' Isaiah's language and thought had been elaborated and developed in the Book of Wisdom[2], and St. Paul appropriates it. To mistake creatures for the Creator, or to think of the glorious and spiritual God as if He were in the form of the corruptible body of man or beast or bird or reptile—so St. Paul alludes to the man worship of Greece and the animal worship of Egypt—is simple blindness and folly; blindness and folly in which St. Paul sees the just punishment of

[1] Isa. xliv. 18–20.

[2] Wisd. xi. 15; xiii, xiv, xv. St. Paul's debt to the Book of Wisdom is apparent (1) in the kinds of idols he mentions; (2) in the way in which the thought of idolatry leads on to that of uncleanness and sexual immorality; and (3) in the idea of retribution by the natural law of results.

the rebellious will in the region of the intellect. But it has another punishment in the region of the appetites or passions. As men deliberately 'repudiated' the knowledge and obedience of God, God 'repudiated' men in penal retribution. He gave them up to become vile in their own eyes and to find out their impotence to control their own lusts. They ran riot even in all sorts of unnatural and lawless ways, so that the world became full of sins of all kinds; sins against God and sins against man; antisocial sins of all sorts, the sins which destroy the state and friendship and commerce and the home: and at the last the very ideal of righteousness had come to be lost. St. Paul, we notice, makes the lowest moral stage of all to consist, not in merely doing these wicked things, but in abandoning all distaste for them—consenting unrestrainedly to those who do them; and this profoundly true remark explains the moral impotence of much that is from other points of view excellent in Greek literature.

4. For the punishment of all this sin St. Paul is not content to look to the 'day of judgement,' though that is to be the final and characteristic expression of divine wrath, and that 'day of wrath' he still probably anticipated in the more

immediate future; but he sees already in the actual world of human society as he knows it the manifold evidence of the divine wrath here and now. Men are receiving in themselves the fitting reward of their perversity. Their life has found its own punishment. The divine wrath is actually disclosed in the facts of experience. 'Look,' St. Paul seems to say, 'at the way men are living, and ask yourselves if there is any interpretation but one of the facts you see. There is but one conclusion possible. God has condemned and is showing His wrath on the human nature which He made.' Just in the same way in an earlier epistle St. Paul speaks of the Jews, even before the destruction of Jerusalem, as already judged, already the subject of the divine wrath[1]. And God's method of judgement is this. The punishment lies in the natural consequences of the lawless actions. The wages of sin is also its fruit[2]. And further, this punishment of sin involves the increased liability to sin again. One sin 'gives us over' to another, as one good action facilitates another. This idea was familiar to Jewish teachers. Among the 'sayings of the Fathers' we find, 'Every fulfilment of duty is rewarded by another,

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 16. [2] Butler's *Analogy*, part i. ch. 2.

and every transgression is punished by another[1].' St. Paul, in fact, in this chapter, may be said to be concentrating for the Christian Church all that is best and deepest in the moral philosophy of Judaism.

Now we are in a position to read the first section of St. Paul's argument without perhaps finding any single idea to the interpretation of which we have not a clue.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonoured among themselves: for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

[1] *Pirqé Aboth*, iv. 2 (cited by S. and H.).

For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.

And even as they refused to have God in *their* knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they which practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them.

1. Perhaps the first question which arises in our minds when reading this passage is, whether St. Paul's general account of the heathen world is not unjustifiably severe. Does he not paint it too black? In fact, the account he gives coincides with the account given by other Jews of the Gentile world as in their experience they found it; and this, we must remember, means the Gentile world of the great cities of the empire. They thought, as they moved about the world and saw what they could not but

see, that God had forsaken the Gentiles because they refused to acknowledge His law. There was sin enough in Israel, but it was remediable. The sin of the Gentiles was irremediable. God had forsaken them [1]. This last idea is of course one entirely alien to St. Paul's mind. To him all God's judgements, at least in this world, have one intention—to awaken men to recognize the truth and to stir them to conversion, 'that he may have mercy upon all.' But otherwise St. Paul's view of the Gentile world, as he experienced it in the cities of mixed Greek and Asiatic population of the Roman Empire, and especially in the notoriously wicked Corinth where he was writing [2], was the ordinary Jewish view. And a contemporary Stoic philosopher, who wrote at Ephesus under the name of Heracleitus, gives a picture of society in that city fully as black [3].

At the same time, if we are to be fair, we must recognize that the account, while true, is not complete. The Gentile life was not without its 'salt.' There was a great deal of virtue, both domestic and philosophical, in the empire

[1] S. and H. p. 49.

[2] He implies, as Dr. Farrar points out, 1 Cor. v. 9-10, that pure society did not exist in Corinth.

[3] See my *Ephesians*, pp. 91, 92, 255.

—more perhaps in the country, of which St. Paul knew little, than in the towns. And the existence of this salt he acknowledges when, in the second chapter of this epistle, he speaks of Gentiles which have no revealed law but do by nature the things of law, being a law unto themselves, and having the effect of the law written in their hearts, and a witnessing conscience, individual and social, to help them[1]: and again, when he intimates that there is an uncircumcision which puts the circumcision to shame by keeping the law[2]. But it is not St. Paul's way to exactly correlate the different aspects of his subject as a modern writer would do. He is a prophet and preacher, not a formally systematic writer. It is enough for him that the sin which he is describing is a reality: that its tendencies are what he describes them to be: that, whatever other counter tendency there may be, sin is so dominant in the world that its results are as he represents them, and that the conscience and experience of those to whom he writes will respond to his indictment.

Nor, if we give its metaphorical meaning to 'idolatry,' is there a word which St. Paul says in this chapter which would not be true of our

[1] Rom. ii. 13–15. [2] Rom. ii. 26.

modern civilization in London or Paris or New York. With us indeed Christianity has been sufficiently vigorous to provide a counteracting force, of infinitely stronger power than existed in the Roman world, to resist corruption. The agencies of divine strength and recovery, the centres of health and light, are infinitely more numerous, stronger, more constant, more progressive. But the world of sin is still what it was: and always there lies upon it the same stamp of the divine condemnation. We look around on the life of our city, with its selfish and disgusting lusts, with its drunkenness, with its enervating luxury, with its selfish wealth, with its reckless and immoral gambling, with its dishonest commerce, with its grasping avarice so neglectful of the lives of those whom it makes its instruments: we look round, I say, not on the whole life, but on the sinful life of our city, and we see what human nature is plainly meant not to be, either in its characteristics or in its miserable issues. And by the interval between what we see life to be and what we know it was meant to be, we can measure the reality of the divine judgement. The facts press upon us the truth which St. Paul would teach. The sinful life is a condemned life. Here is an

actual disclosure of the wrath of God upon all unrighteousness and sin.

2. But what will 'science' say to St. Paul's account of human degeneracy and degradation? Does not St. Paul seem to talk, as moralists in general have been disposed to talk, as if the course of the world's history had been a downward course? and is not this the religious view? and is it not directly opposed to the scientific view of a gradual process of development and advance? This is a very common form of question to suggest itself to our minds. And the answer to it appears to be this[1]:—The biblical view of the world is not by any means that as a whole it has gone from bad to worse. It recognizes periods and areas of degradation, and suggests periods and areas of stagnation. And this is what anthropology and history equally suggest. But its main concern is with the history of one particular line of human advancement under divine guidance through Abraham and Moses and prophets and kings, through Christ and His Church: an advancement which is to be finally world-wide, and even more than world-wide, in its effects. Other lines of progress in civilization and knowledge

[1] See also app. note E on physical science and the fall.

the Bible recognizes but is not largely concerned with. But it is in its general effect thoroughly in accord with science, which suggests not general and equable advance over the whole region of humanity, but advance in special departments along the line of select races, continually impeded in its progress by counter tendencies, by periods and areas of degradation, and still more of stagnation[1]. Science, indeed, utters no word of promise at all as to the ultimate result of all this evolution[2]. It is faith, of whatsoever sort, not science, that can make us optimistic as to the issue of human history.

But no doubt the Bible does throughout postulate the existence of sin; and it claims that sin everywhere, and from the first, has been a cause of degradation in the individual and the race. Now here is the real point at issue in the relations of religion and science. The

[1] Cf. F. B. Jevons, *Introd. to the Hist. of Religion* (Methuen), pp. 394, 395: 'Everywhere it is the many who lapse: the few who hold right on. The progressive peoples of the earth are in a minority.' 'Though evolution is universal, progress is exceptional.'

[2] Cf. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* (Romanes Lecture, 1893, Macmillan), p. 36: 'The theory of evolution encourages no millennial anticipations. If, for millions of years, our globe has taken the upward road, yet, some time, the summit will be reached, and the downward route will be commenced.'

main question is not about human origins or a primaeval fall. It is simply on the comparatively easy field of actual human existence. Is human freedom—freedom within limits to choose and act—a reality? Can man therefore misuse this freedom to do what he need not have done and ought not to have done? And has he, in fact, constantly been doing morally wrong things, wilfully and knowingly, which he need not have done? Does, therefore, the area of human history present at every stage a result or product which human wilfulness and lawlessness, that is, sin, has contributed to spoil and to degrade below its natural level? Now it is this—the real existence of countless human actions which need not have been and ought not to have been — which contemporary science, with a necessitarian bias, is largely occupied in denying. Granted the reality within limits—limits which have no doubt often been grossly exaggerated, but granted the reality within due limits—of human freedom, and therefore the possibility and reality of actual sin and guilt and degradation which need not have been, I do not believe there remains any serious conflict in the moral region between religion and science. The conflict, I say, is continually

being taken back into the region of original sin or the original fall. But this is a quite secondary area of debate, in which I believe there can be no serious disagreement, if there is agreement in the primary area of actual human sin. The universal moral consciousness and common sense of man bears witness to the fact that we can do and do do what we ought and need not. It recognizes, moreover, the moral truth of St. Paul's idea that this lawlessness of the will has its perverting effects on the intelligence and on the passions. The human conscience then responds to St. Paul's account of the origin and history of human sin, and of its fruits both in the individual and in society. And if psychological science is inclined to deny the very existence of any faculty of free choice such as makes sin possible, it will be found on examination to be going very far beyond what it can prove. For the reality of guilt and sin, and the degradation which results from it, we have the human consciousness; against it we have no positive evidence: nothing in fact but the habitual unwillingness of specialist science, physical or theological, to recognize its limits.

3. St. Paul finds the root of sin in the refusal

of man in general to recognize God. He asserts that they might have known Him, or rather did know Him, but declined to act on that knowledge. Now it is noticeable that he does not ascribe this knowledge of God, which he declares to have been possible to man everywhere, to an original revelation, nor even in this place to the moral conscience, but to the evidence of nature. In this, as in his ridicule of idolatry, he is in accordance, not only with Jewish thought, but with contemporary Greek philosophy. The argument from design had become habitual in the schools, having been stated first of all with transparent simplicity by Xenophon in his account of the reasoning of Socrates. St. Paul then finds in this instinctive inference from nature up to nature's God, 'a testimony of the soul naturally Christian.' He is able, at Lystra and Athens, to assume that men will respond to it.

It is another question, into which St. Paul does not specifically enter, how far back in human history the appreciation of this reasoning goes. But it is worth noticing that among our contemporary investigators of the history of religion, some at least of the most acute have been coming back to what we may call a modified

form of the doctrine of an original monotheism[1]. They think that even savage religions generally bear traces, that are plainly independent, of a belief in one great and mostly good God; and that there is no evidence that this higher belief was developed out of the lower belief in manifold spirits of more ambiguous characters. They see no reason to suppose that the higher belief has been gradually arrived at within any period into which the human mind can penetrate with its investigations or its well-grounded conjectures. Humanity appears to them to have been haunted from its origins with this belief in the one God; and they regard all the higher religious movements as attempts not so much to arrive at, as to retain hold on, a belief which is continually in danger of being overlaid and forgotten. It does not appear that anthropological science is at all likely to disprove such a view which on the other hand has a great deal of evidence to justify it. At least, the

[1] The allusion is to (1) Jevons (*op. cit.* cap. xxv), who seems to think some 'amorphous' form of monotheism may very probably lie behind totemism. He strongly repudiates the notion that the lower form is necessarily the older. (2) Andrew Lang, *Making of Religion* (Longmans, 1898), chaps. ix and xv. Cp. also Orr's *Christian view of God and the World* (Elliot, 1893), pp. 212 ff., and notes E, F, G.

evidences of deterioration in the history of religion are manifold and conspicuous. The lowest view of God and man is not by any means always the oldest. And the recognition of such facts is quite consonant with the doctrine of the evolution of religion in its more reasonable forms.

Meanwhile, every one is in sufficient harmony with St. Paul's argument who recognizes the universal facts of sin and guilt and needless moral deterioration among men; and who recognizes also that the secret of sin is the wilful refusal on men's part to know God as they might have known Him, and obey Him as they might have obeyed Him.

4. Besides these difficult questions, we should mark what is both plain and instructive, that St. Paul regards man as necessarily living either above himself or below himself. Man's true nature is to be in dependence upon God. Therein is his true liberty and dignity of sonship. When he tries to be independent, to be his own master simply, he loses the true principle of self-government and becomes the victim of his own passions. God 'gave men up,' handed them over as slaves to dishonouring passions. This theory of human nature is intimately bound up with all St. Paul's

teaching about grace and redemption, and we shall hear more of it.

5. We shall do well to notice, finally, one consequence which follows from recognizing that the lowest stage of moral degradation lies, not merely in doing what is wrong, but in having ceased to disapprove of it. That is to say, the lowest moral stage carries with it a complete loss of ideal, or absence of the standard of right and wrong; and this lowest stage is anticipated before it is reached. It follows, therefore, and we must not forget it, that the actual conscience of the individual, or of the society, at any particular moment affords no adequate standard of right and wrong. The moral conscience, like the intelligence in general, requires enlightenment. It supplies no trustworthy information, except so far as we are at pains to keep it enlightened. More than this, its capacity to keep us admonished depends on our habitually observing its injunctions. To disobey conscience is to dull it, and finally to make it obdurate and insensitive. The absence of conscientious objection to a particular course of action may therefore be due either to our having neglected to enlighten our conscience or to having refused to obey it. The duty of an

individual to himself is not only to obey his conscience, but also take pains to enlighten it. And the duty of the individual to society is to make continual efforts to keep the corporate conscience up to standard.

DIVISION I. § 2. CHAPTER ii. 1–29.

Judgement on the Jews.

ST. PAUL in his judgement of the Gentile world is but repeating, with more of moral discernment, what he would have learned in his Jewish training. But the strict Jews who had taught St. Paul, though some among them must have been good men, ready to enter into the deeply penitential spirit of their psalmists and prophets, do not seem as a rule to have liked to think of their own people as liable to divine condemnation. They chose to suppose that the Gentile world alone was the area upon which divine vengeance would light, while the Jews were to appear as the instruments of God's judgements, or at least themselves exempt from them. They had forgotten all the superabundant warnings against such a spirit which the prophets from Amos to John the Baptist had let fall. This frame of mind—censorious when

it looks without, lenient to the point of blindness when it looks within—sometimes appears when one thinks of things in the abstract as almost impossible, in the form at least in which St. Paul here proceeds to attribute it to the Jews. We can hardly believe that any responsible beings could be so blind as St. Paul implies that his pious fellow-countrymen were. But it needs only experience to convince us that even in its grosser forms this frame of mind is extraordinarily common in individuals, in nations, and in churches. Certainly the nation of England is not, and the representatives of religious England too often are not, exempt from the common failing. And in the case of the Jews we have also the witness of our Lord. He represents the religious Jewish world as honeycombed with hypocrisy of a plain and gross sort. They are to Him very types of the men who behold the mote that is in their brother's eye, but consider not the beam that is in their own eyes. St. Paul's witness then is only the same as the Christ's.

Here then St. Paul turns abruptly upon a Jew who may be supposed to have been listening to the indictment of the Gentiles with expressions of sympathy, and bids him look

within and recognize that the Jew also falls under the same indictment and on the same grounds. And he proceeds sternly to cut away any possible ground of confidence which he might derive from the thought that he had 'Abraham to his father.' God's judgement is directed by an absolutely impartial 'truth' or estimate of the facts in their inner reality. If in any particular case of persistent sin His judgement seems to linger, it is not that He has forgotten or will overlook; it is only that He is merciful and forbearing, and gives long space for repentance[1]. But, meanwhile, if the opportunity is not taken, if the heart is hard and impenitent, a store is being laid up against the offender in the place of judgement, which will break out in the great day in manifested wrath. God's principle of judgement is absolutely free from partiality. There are men

[1] Cf. Eccles. viii. 11: 'Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is emboldened to do evil.' Ps. x. 11: 'He saith in his heart, God hath forgotten.' Wisd. xi. 23: 'Thou overlookest the sins of men to the end they may repent.' Ecclus. v. 4: 'Say not, I sinned, and what happened unto me? For the Lord is longsuffering.' 2 Pet. iii. 9: 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' Cf. also Isa. lvii. 11.

who have steadily in view the true aim of human life, its imperishable glory, its final and permanent honour, and, therefore, preferring eternal to temporal things, patiently go on doing good; they may be Jews or Greeks, but in either case indifferently, the reward that they have sought will be theirs with the accompaniment of inward peace. There are other men who are contentious, and refusing the leading of the truth, make themselves servants to unrighteousness. They may be Jews or Gentiles, but the divine wrath, showing itself in outward suffering and inward anguish, will be upon them all equally. For God judges men impartially in the light of their opportunities. Those who have the advantage of a revealed law shall be judged and acquitted according as they have, not listened to it merely, but obeyed it. For a law known and not kept, so far from commending us to God, is but the instrument of our judgement. And those who have not this advantage are yet not without an inward light in the natural moral consciousness of mankind. Those who have sinned against this light shall find nothing else was needed to bring them to their ruin. And those, on the other hand, who by its help keep the moral law in effect, without

any assistance from a revealed law, are their own law for themselves. They have the law in its practical result written in their hearts as their conduct shows, and their natural conscience bears its accompanying witness. For conscience, both individual and social, reflecting on all human actions to condemn, or, more rarely, to acquit, anticipates the final divine judgement which, as St. Paul continually announces, it will be the office of Jesus the Christ to pass unerringly upon things secret as well as open in the 'day of the Lord.'

The specially revealed law on which the Jew relied, which it is his boast to have received from God, and in virtue of which he could rightly claim to have a knowledge of divine things which other men had not, and to be the teacher of the nations, the interpreter to other men of the divine will—this law finds its first application to those themselves to whom it is given. How can they preach the commandments, whether it be the eighth or the seventh or the second that is in question, so long as they have so bad a reputation for keeping them? They cannot deny that as of old, so now, their moral conduct causes the heathen to blaspheme their religion, instead of

being drawn towards it. To have received circumcision in physical fact is of no profit at all, unless it be accompanied by the obedience of which the mark in the flesh is but the symbol. Disobedience is in God's sight uncircumcision. And where the obedience is, God will reckon it as if the symbol were there also. The morally obedient Gentile will sit in judgement on the morally disobedient Jew. For that is the divine principle. God everywhere and always looks to the spiritual reality as it is seated in heart and will, and is satisfied never by outward distinctions. Jew (Judah) means 'praise.' But if the Jew is to merit his name, he must not be satisfied with the applause of men. He must commend himself to God who sees the heart.

Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things. And we know that the judgement of God is according to truth against them that practise such things. And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the

day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God; who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, *shall be* wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law; for not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified: for when Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves; in that they shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith[1], and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing *them*; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ.

But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and restest upon the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

[1] Or rather 'their own conscience bearing witness with them and, in their mutual relations, their reflections accusing or even excusing them.'

thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written. For circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a doer of the law: but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision. If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? and shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who with the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

1. As at the end of the first chapter we asked whether St. Paul was fair to the Gentile world, so now we ask whether he is fair to those of his own race whose religious tendencies he had known so well from inside. And the answer again is that he undoubtedly represents aright the dominant tendency and temper among them. The prophets had always had to fight against the natural but false idea of divine election, which held the Jewish race secure in the favour of Jehovah, simply because He was their God and they were His people. They bring to bear

all the activities of an inspired intelligence and heart to make their fellow-countrymen perceive that they are only secure in God's favour so long as they are like Him in character. Now down to the period of the Captivity, the prophets could also denounce the people because they were constantly false to Jehovah in matters of worship as well as of morality. After the Captivity, however, the tendency to idolatry is gone for ever. After the Maccabean period the exclusive and legitimate worship of Jehovah becomes a matter of passionate enthusiasm in the Jewish race. Henceforth therefore their danger from the false idea of election passes into a new phase. We must be in the favour of God, they now could plead, because we have Abraham to our father, and because we keep to the worship of our God with an irreproachable zeal for His law. Against this sort of strengthened pleading John the Baptist, the last of the prophets, aims his bare moral teaching. God's wrath is just about to fall upon His people he declares, because it lacks in real moral righteousness. Repent ye, be changed, get you a new heart—is his one word of preaching. This keynote passes intensified into the teachings and the denunciations of Christ. Nothing

more surely stamps the narrative of 'the woman taken in adultery' as historically genuine[1], than its profound truth to the moral attitude of Christ in face of Scribes and Pharisees. The point of His reply to their trial question is that they who would enforce a divine law, and thus stand for God before the world, must themselves be morally sound. 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.' It is moral conformity, not merely orthodoxy, which qualifies us to act for God. It is then precisely this attitude of Christ towards the Jews zealous for the law, which St. Paul is reproducing in the passage which we have just read.

He suggests also in its last words—where he is playing on the meaning of the name of Judah—another deep element in Christ's depreciation of the religious spirit of the Jews. Their religion was a matter of public opinion—with all the stagnancy which belongs to the public opinion of a compact society—not a matter which lived with ever fresh life in the inner relation of the conscience to God. 'How can ye believe which receive glory one of another, and the glory which cometh from the only God ye seek not?'

[1] It is certainly misplaced as it stands (John vii. 53-viii. 11).

St. Paul then is certainly right in his estimate of Jewish religion. One indeed who describes with as vivid reality as he does the pride of a Jew in his religious privileges—one who had all the reason that Saul of Tarsus had for knowing what it was to feel this emotion from within—could hardly have been wrong in his estimate of its weaknesses.

And if the particular moral defects which St. Paul attributes to the religious Jew are surprisingly grave—theft, adultery, and temple-robbery—here too what he says out of his own experience is confirmed from other quarters. Avarice was a notorious sin of Jews. Our Lord accuses the Scribes of 'devouring widows' houses[1]' under cloak of religion, and denounces the Pharisees also for leaving their outwardly purified cups and platters inwardly full of 'extortion.' It is only a subtler form of theft that He alludes to when He denounces them for sanctioning the practice of dedicating property as a 'corban' to the purposes of religion in order to evade the righteous claims of parents. The story of Susanna, the brief but stern words of our Lord about the seventh commandment in His Sermon on the Mount, and His

[1] Mark xii. 40; Luke xx. 47; Matt. xxiii. 25.

significant language on the occasion already alluded to of the woman taken in adultery, interpret St. Paul's language as to sins of the flesh. And the language of the town clerk at Ephesus in exculpating St. Paul and his company, suggests that 'temple-robbery' was a not unfamiliar imputation upon Jews. It appears that with all their horror of idols—and though everything connected with an idol was expressly declared to be 'an abomination,' unless it had been already desecrated by Gentiles[1]—they could not always resist the opportunity of appropriating the rich stores of the temples. The 'religious' Scribes and Pharisees (though not of course the best of them) were, in fact, as a body truly hypocrites, as our Lord summarily said they were.

And there lies in the moral failure of the Jews a very much needed warning to us nineteenth-century Christians against censoriousness. 'Judging' occupies so large a part in our ordinary conversation. In the religious world, we condemn so freely—Romanists, Dissenters, those who are of a different party to ourselves: in the social world—those of a different class, those who employ us, or whom we employ,

[1] Cf. S. and H. *in loc.*

those whom in any way we do not like or who go contrary to us. We are always judging. But to judge, we are taught, is a great responsibility. With what judgement we judge, we shall be judged. It is of the utmost consequence that before we judge others we should have judged ourselves. And to have done that truthfully has a tendency to make us charitable in our estimate of others, because we are deeply conscious of our own need of merciful and lenient consideration.

2. What St. Paul teaches about the moral consciousness, and possibility of moral goodness, among the Gentiles has not a Jewish sound at all. The Jewish teachers generally would not have admitted any goodness acceptable to God in the heathen world. In fact, St. Paul is here, as in his speech at Athens, accepting the principle of a universal presence and operation of God in the human heart, outside the limit of any special revelation, and he accepts it in terms largely derived from current Stoic philosophy.

The Stoics, arising when the Greek city life was decaying, contemplated man as an individual, and undertook to show him how to lead a good life. A good life means a 'life according

to nature,' or 'according to reason': the reason of the individual being a part of the universal reason or God. And as a help in living according to reason, the Stoics laid stress upon the conscience in each man, i.e. a faculty lying behind his ordinary surface self, passing judgement according to reason upon his actions, and 'making cowards of us all,' inasmuch as we all do wrong.

'No one,' said Seneca, St. Paul's contemporary, 'will be found who can acquit himself; and any man calling himself innocent has regard to the human witness, not to his own conscience.' He quotes an 'admirable saying of Epicurus,' 'The beginning of safety is the knowledge of sin.' He inculcates the duty of strict self-examination, and tells us how he performed it himself at night: 'when the light is removed, and my wife, who is by this time aware of my practice, is now silent, I pass the whole of my day under examination.' Then he 'opens out his conscience to the gods.' And this conscience is to every man a sort of inward God[1]. It is in fact the representative in each man of the universal, immutable, and divine moral law, the

[1] See for Seneca, Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 'St. Paul and Seneca,' pp. 278–280.

law of nature, in conformity with which is the only true freedom and citizenship of the world. 'For this' (the world of the moral order), said another contemporary of St. Paul, also a philosopher, 'is the common home of all, and its law is no written document (letter), but God. And if a man transgresses what the law imposes, he will be impious; or rather he will not dare transgress, for he could not escape. Justice has many furies, watch-dogs for sins[1].' There is in Cicero's *Republic* a magnificent expression of the principle of the law of nature: 'There is a true law which is right reason, agreeable to nature, diffused among all men, constant, eternal, which calls us to duty by its injunctions, and by its prohibitions deters us from wrong; which upon the good lays neither injunction nor prohibition in vain; while for the bad, neither its injunctions nor its prohibitions avail at all. This law admits neither of addition nor subtraction nor abrogation. The vote of neither senate nor people can discharge us from our obligation to it. We are not to look for some other person to expound or interpret it; nor will there be one law for Rome and another for Athens, nor

[1] See *Pseudo-Heracleitus*, Letter ix, p. 91 (Bernays).

one at this date and another later on; but one law shall embrace all races over all time, eternal and immortal; and there shall be hereby one common master and commander of all—God, who originated this law and proposed it and arbitrates concerning it; and if any one obeys it not, he shall play false to himself and shall do despite to the nature of man, and by this very fact shall pay the greatest penalties, even if he should escape all else that is reckoned punishment.' It is of interest to notice that the words cited by St. Paul before the Areopagus[1], 'We are also God's offspring,' occur in a hymn of the Stoic Cleanthes, full of the thought of man's relation through his reason to the universal and divine law.

Of this type of thought and language then St. Paul avails himself, in spite of the immense differences which disclose themselves below the surface between the Stoic and the Christian ideas of God. He avails himself of Stoic phraseology about men being God's offspring in his speech at Athens, as being in accordance with what he, the Christian apostle, had to teach. And here he adopts in substance the Stoic language with regard to conscience. As by inference from

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

nature all men can know of God's power and divine attributes, so, St. Paul says, from the witness of conscience they may know the principles of His moral government[1]. St. Paul, however, rightly refuses to be satisfied with the individual conscience. The social judgement—the social verdicts of condemnation or acquittal continually being passed—co-operate with it to anticipate the judgements of God. And in virtue of the inward light of reason, and the conscience[2] both individual and social, he held that men who lie outside the region of special revelation can possess the moral law in effect in their hearts, and, it is implied, can keep it.

St. Paul is mainly occupied in this epistle in contrasting the Christian Church, as a region where spiritual power is given in response to faith to enable a man to fulfil the divine law, both with the heathen world, plunged in moral wickedness, and with the Jewish Church in its failure to attain to divine righteousness by the law of works—of which more hereafter.

[1] See Rom. i. 32 as well as Rom. ii. 14.

[2] 'Conscience,' as used by St. Paul's contemporaries and by himself, is not a repository for positive moral guidance, but rather a faculty for reflecting upon our own already accomplished actions. See further, app. note B, on the idea of conscience.

But there were among the Jews true sons of Abraham: and there were among the Gentiles good men acceptable to God, like righteous Job. St. Paul does not theorize about this. But there is at least no reason to deny that he would have declared these righteous men to be justified by faith and sanctified by grace, i.e. justified by that degree of truthful correspondence with God which was possible for them; and kept in harmony with the will of God by His Spirit. There is no reason to believe that St. Paul would not have admitted some action of faith and grace among the non-christian Gentiles, as he undoubtedly does among the prae-christian Jews who lived under or before the law. When he says of the good heathen that they do '*by nature* the things contained in the law,' he uses the expression not as equivalent to 'by their own unassisted powers, without the help of God,' but simply to mean 'without the help of any special revelation[1].'

[1] See on this subject *Life and Letters of Dr. Hort* (Macmillan), vol. ii. p. 337: 'Faith itself, not being an intellectual assent to propositions, but an attitude of heart and mind, is present in a more or less rudimentary state in every upward effort or aspiration of man.' Also Gibson, *Thirty-Nine Articles* (Methuen), ii. p. 420.

Universally then, according to St. Paul, two sources of the knowledge of God exist; nature, with its evidences of the divine power and other similar attributes, and conscience, with its witness to divine righteousness. And, though the sciences of nature and man have grown since St. Paul's day past recognition, nothing (we may boldly say) has really weakened either element of this double witness. It is, and remains true, that the only reasonable argument from the universal order of nature is to a universal reason or mind: and that the method by which the moral conscience may be believed to have developed out of 'animal intelligence,' makes no difference as to the cogency of its witness to a divine righteousness, in response to which alone it could have developed as in fact it has done. It is worth notice also before we leave this part of our subject, that St. Paul's line of thought affords a true explanation of the double fact that, on the one hand, the actual moral standards with which the conscience of different individuals, races, and generations is satisfied, greatly varies; and, on the other hand, that all the standards tend towards unity in a common idea of righteousness. The tendency towards unity St. Paul would attribute to the divine righteousness

which lies behind conscience and which it exists to reflect. The variations would be due to the different degrees of development reached; or still more to the different degrees of faithfulness or unfaithfulness, attention or inattention, with which the conscience of the race or the individual has responded to the light. The conscience, like the speculative reason, is an instrument for coming to the truth; but an instrument capable of every variety of racial or individual error or obtuseness.

3. It appears clearly enough in this chapter, that St. Paul's doctrines of free grace and justification by faith must be grossly and carelessly misconceived unless they are viewed upon a deep background of what we commonly call 'natural religion,' that is (practically) the religion that appeals straight off to the conscience of almost all honest and civilized men. It is 'natural religion' to believe that God will judge men with absolute power and insight and impartiality according to their conduct and their characters: that there can be no 'making believe,' no substitute for a good character, and no escaping with a bad one. The prophets are full of this principle. Our Lord reasserts it. It is emphasized by St. James, whose plain

point is that we are justified not by right belief (which is what he means by 'faith'), but by a good life. But no one could assert the principle more simply and absolutely as the basis of all his special evangelical teaching than St. Paul. And whatever is true about free grace and justification by faith only, is true because, and only because, this free grace and this justifying faith are necessary means or steps towards the realization of actual righteousness. So St. Paul states it—'that the requirement of the (divine) law might be fulfilled in us who walk[1]' according to the principles of the 'gospel of the grace of God.' The doctrine of grace is rooted and based upon the truths of natural religion, and leads up to their realization. It has been then a most perilous mistake when missionaries have preached the doctrines of grace and redemption in regions where there had been no preparatory training in natural religion —in the truth of the unity and power and moral character of God: of the reality of our responsibility towards Him: of His inexorable holiness: of His inaccessibility to any kind of bribe or attempt to find some substitute for moral obedience. Men must have known what

[1] Rom. viii. 4.

it is to tremble in the recesses of their being 'as guilty men surprised' before God's awful righteousness; to 'tremble,' like Felix, at the message of 'righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come,' before they can safely learn the lesson of His grace and pardon.

And there are two minor elements in natural religion, as commonly understood, for which St. Paul here makes himself responsible. It has been generally understood that all men instinctively desire their own happiness, and that this is natural and right; and that as we should reasonably prefer our more permanent and deeper good to what is only transitory and superficial, so we should strive for the happiness and satisfaction which is eternal—the eternal reward, which only the stern pursuit of virtue can obtain for us. This deep desire for our own substantial happiness our Lord sanctions and continually suggests as a principal motive for right living. The love of others does not annihilate it. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*.' So then St. Paul also, following his Master, recognizes it as lying at the heart of what is right and true in mankind, that we should 'seek' for ourselves 'glory, honour, and incorruption'—the glory and honour which abide

eternally. It is plain that he would have us pay no heed to that truly unnatural modern altruism which would disparage and depreciate this motive of a right self-love, and which would treat the desire for eternal happiness, and fear of eternal loss, as a base and unworthy element in religion. No doubt it is not the only motive. It is not even the characteristically Christian motive. But it is a natural and legitimate motive all the same. It is an inextinguishable consciousness in us that we were meant for blessedness.

But, once more, the only true happiness is moral happiness: it is a 'glory and honour' springing out of the man's character and belonging to it: it is a happiness that is in this sense deserved. True, the servant of God in heaven will always feel that what he is receiving is infinitely beyond his deserts, and that his deserts are what God has wrought in him, not he himself. None the less the reward springs out of and belongs to what God has actually made him to be. Heaven is not a happy place in such a sense that we could be made happy by being 'put there' by an arbitrary fiat of God. It is fellowship with God, the All-holy; and God's holiness is intolerable, it is 'devouring fire and

everlasting burnings,' to those who are not morally like Him. Here lies the reason why a heaven is not possible to moral beings without the accompanying possibilities of a hell. For the moral possibility of acquiring the holy character involves the opposite moral possibility: and it does not lie in the moral nature of things that the bad character should receive anything except what it deserves—the 'indignation and wrath' which God, because He is God, must express towards the sinful, wilful character, and which to the character itself means 'tribulation and anguish.' This, St. Paul says positively, must be the lot of 'every soul of man that doeth evil.' It is this inevitably two-sided law that a large part of the kindly-disposed world to-day are trying to get rid of, or to forget, on its severe and dark side. But it is in fact a law that works even more necessarily and inexorably than physical laws, inasmuch as it is the expression of God's necessary moral being. God cannot 'let us off' the punishment of our sins, which is only their inevitable fruit. Nor does He disclose to us any necessary limit to the ruin which we may work in our being. This stern principle of natural religion is taken up into, and indeed intensified in, the gospel.

St. Paul, however, neither here nor elsewhere uses 'immortality' to describe the future state of those whom God condemns. He uses it only of God and of those who enjoy the vision of God. The 'immortality of the soul'—the idea that every soul as such necessarily and consciously exists to all eternity—is an idea which the language of Scripture does not seem to warrant.

4. There are also two less prominent points in the second chapter that we must not entirely pass over.

St. Paul, we should find, if we were to investigate the matter, is wholly true in his interpretation of the Old Testament in general. He interprets its spirit and meaning with perfect insight. But he is not always what we should call critically exact, any more than the other interpreters of his day, in his use of particular texts. Thus, in this chapter he gives to some words of Isaiah[1] a meaning which is indeed to be found elsewhere in the prophets[2], but does not really belong to the original of this particular passage. Isaiah is saying that God's name is being blasphemed *by the oppressors of Israel*—

[1] Isa. lii. 5.

[2] See in Ezek. xxxvi. 22: 'My holy name, which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye went.'

'Continually all day long my name is blasphemed.' But the Greek version of the Bible inserted the words 'through you' (the Jews[1]); and St. Paul interprets this insertion to mean that it was the moral inconsistency of the chosen people themselves which caused God's name to be blasphemed. Perhaps the fact that he uses the formula of quotation 'as it is written' *after* the words referred to, is a sign that he had employed the words in his own sense before he became conscious that they were in fact a quotation. But in any case he shows no anxiety to follow critically the original meaning of a particular passage which he cites.

At the end of this passage occurs the antithesis familiar in modern language of 'the letter and the spirit.' In its modern sense it is used as equivalent to the literal and the metaphorical, or the definite and the vague. But this is not at all its sense in St. Paul. With him 'the letter' means the written law, and 'spirit' means, in this connexion, what we may broadly describe as vital moral energy. Thus,

[1] Dr. Gifford suggests that the LXX was subsequently modified by St. Paul's citation (as in the next chapter, iii. 10–18), instead of his citation being moulded by the LXX. Is there any evidence in support of this view

in its most characteristic use with St. Paul, the antithesis distinguishes the mere external information as to God's will, which was all the written law ('the letter') could give the Jews, from the activity of the Holy Spirit or the spiritual power of moral freedom which, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we enjoy under the gospel. In this passage the antithesis is similar, but not the same. It contrasts the merely physical state of circumcision according to the written law—'with the letter and circumcision' means 'having the written law and being accordingly circumcised'—with what the Old Testament had called 'the circumcised heart,' i.e. the really obedient will or 'spirit' which may exist independently of the outward rite. 'Spirit,' we observe, may refer to the activity of either the Holy Spirit of God, or of the human will, or of both without discrimination.

DIVISION I. § 3. Chapter III. 1–8.

Jewish objections.

This passage is interesting as showing us, what is more often the case than appears on the surface, that St. Paul has in mind as he reasons the familiar objections of an opponent—his own objections, perhaps in part, before he was a Christian. St. Paul, that is to say, very frequently writes controversially, and argues *ad hominem*: and his own reasoning is only rightly understood when we have clearly in view what he is opposing. It of course very frequently happens in literature generally that a saying is completely misunderstood, because that with which it is contrasted is overlooked. Thus, John the Baptist's advice to the soldiers to 'be content with their wages' is commonly interpreted to mean—'Be satisfied with your wages

as they are, and do not ask for more.' This might have been good advice or bad advice to give to the soldiers, but it is not John the Baptist's. He means, 'Be satisfied with your pay and do not supplement it by robbery and unauthorized exaction.' Here then the implied contrast is necessary to enable us to interpret aright the positive advice. Similarly in the case of St. Paul, his doctrine of the absoluteness of the divine election, as stated later in this epistle [1], has been misunderstood, because it has been supposed that he is asserting the divine absoluteness as against the claim of man to moral freedom, and to equitable judgement in accordance with responsibility. But in fact this is what he is indirectly vindicating. What he is arguing against is the claim of the Jews that God was bound to their race. It is against this claim—this immoral claim to perpetual privilege on the part of one race, however they might behave—that St. Paul exalts the absolute freedom of God to choose or reject as He sees fit. It is of great importance then, especially with a writer so frequently controversial as St. Paul, to watch continually to see which is the phase of thought or feeling that

[1] Chapters ix–xi.

he is opposing. Frequently, as I say, it hardly appears on the surface of St. Paul's writing that he really has a definite opponent in view. Sometimes, as in the passage now to be considered, it becomes apparent, and the argument is best exhibited in the form of a dialogue (though to let the dialogue appear clearly, missing links have to be supplied) thus—

Jewish Objector. But if all this is true—if Jews are no better off than Gentiles—of what use is it to be a Jew? What is the value of our circumcision and the position into which it initiates us? (ver. 1.)

St. Paul. Its value is manifold. To take one point first[1], it lies in the fact that the oracles of God—His teaching and promises—were entrusted to our race (ver. 2).

J. O. But if God thus of old gave special promises to us as His special people, and if now we are simply like the heathen under His wrath, the conclusion is that He has been false to His promises (argument implied in ver. 3).

S. P. No: that is not to be thought of. It is not God who has played false, it is man: it is our race. The Jews refused to believe: not however all of them, but some. If there is

[1] The points are resumed in ix. 1.

a trial between God and His people as to which has been true, it is God who must be vindicated as the Psalmist says [1] (vers. 3, 4).

J. O. But if, as your teaching proves, all our unrighteousness is made to serve as a background on which God makes His righteousness all the more evident—that is enough. Our wrong-doing serves its purpose in this way. God has no right both to use our wrong-doing for His own purposes, and then, besides this, to visit His wrath upon us (ver. 5[a]).

S. P. Such thoughts our human nature suggests (ver. 5[b]). But we know they are false. God is the judge of the world, and His action necessarily supplies the standard of all judicial righteousness (ver. 6).

J. O. But do consider my point. If the result of my playing false to God is that His fidelity is only thrown into higher relief and the whole process ministers to His glory, why am I, the unconscious instrument of His glory, treated as an offender? and why should I not resolve to go on freely doing wrong (as you yourself are sometimes accused of teaching), so as to give God more abundant opportunities to overrule my action for the greater good? (vers. 7, 8[a].)

[1] Ps. xxxii.

S. P. A man stands justly condemned in the very using of such an argument (ver. 8 [b]).

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God. For what if some were without faith? shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God? God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar; as it is written,

That thou mightest be justified in thy words,

And mightest prevail when thou comest into judgement.

But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath? (I speak after the manner of men.) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? and why not (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just.

What is of interest here is to notice that St. Paul reproduces the argument of his Jewish opponent with great sympathetic force. It had clearly been weighed in his own mind. It was urged, no doubt, against his own teaching, that it gave an excuse for sinning by suggesting that the greatness of the sin only glorified the super-abundant greatness of the pardoning love. It is only too probable that some of his followers were persuaded by some such argument, or acted as

if they were. Thus St. Paul states it with vigour, but thereby only makes all the more apparent the meagreness of his reply. Not that the argument is such as makes reply difficult. In a slightly different form St. Paul deals with it elaborately in chapters ix–xi. But here he clearly treats it as contemptible when its true character has once been disclosed. And why? Because it is professedly an explanation of the ways of God with man, which is at the same time an excuse for immorality. It is an intellectual exercise at the expense of conscience. And St. Paul shows, by the very contempt with which he treats it, that a man who will play false with his conscience, and then proceed to find intellectual justifications, is not to be met in the intellectual region at all. He has been condemned already.

St. Paul then, we find, will not argue with one who reasons at the expense of his conscience; and this is an important principle. When the intellect is acting purely, it must be free, and must be dealt with seriously on its own ground. But the conscience must be followed first of all. Its light is clearer than the light of intellect, and must be left supreme. Whatever be the bewilderment of my intellect, I am self-condemned,

God-condemned, if I play false to the moral light. And arguments to the contrary, however clever-sounding or philosophical, are in fact sophistry. There is, we must confess, a good deal of such sophistry to-day in the use of arguments drawn from the current philosophy of necessitarianism and the idea of heredity.

DIVISION I. § 4. Chapter III. 9–20.

Sin and condemnation universal.

At this point the direct argument with an opponent is dropped; and St. Paul restates what he has so far been occupied in proving. It is not that Jews are in a worse position than Gentiles. It is that all together are involved in the same moral failure. To deepen the impression that this is a true statement, St. Paul culls from various psalms and from Isaiah a series of passages describing a general state of depravity, moral blindness, apathy, failure, unprofitableness, falsity, hatred, and outrage against God and man. These utterances of the book of 'the law' (here used for the Old Testament scriptures generally) are meant for those first to whom this law belonged. They condemn Jews as well as Gentiles. They show all equally to be under

divine judgement. They prove that if the written law could teach men God's will, it could not, by the works that it enjoined, enable him to satisfy God. It had its function only in teaching him to know his sinfulness by contrast to his plainly declared duty. The conclusion is then that all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, are involved in sin, are under the wrath of a holy God, and are in utter need of a deliverance which they are incapable of procuring for themselves.

What then? are we in worse case than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; as it is written,

There is none righteous, no, not one;
There is none that understandeth,
There is none that seeketh after God;
They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable;
There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one:
Their throat is an open sepulchre;
With their tongues they have used deceit:
The poison of asps is under their lips:
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:
Their feet are swift to shed blood;
Destruction and misery are in their ways;
And the way of peace have they not known:
There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every

mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgement of God: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for through the law *cometh* the knowledge of sin.

1. The 'Scripture proof' which St. Paul here offers of universal human corruption is, according to a recognized Hebrew practice, made up by stringing together a number of separate texts,—Ps. xiv. 1–3, v. 9, cxl. 3, x. 7, Isa. lix. 7, 8, Ps. xxxvi. 1. They represent the impression made by human wickedness upon the righteous observer. The estimate covers Israel as well as, indirectly, the world at large[1]. It is thus an authoritative rebuke to Jewish self-complacency. It is as if an English preacher were to rebuke similar self-complacency in Englishmen by a collection of passages from standard English authorities, in which our nation was judged, in common with others, in a manner most humiliating to its pride. It is this, though, inasmuch as the psalmists and prophets were and are believed to have spoken under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, it is also something more.

It is well known that, as the quotations in

[1] Dr. King (*The Psalms in Three Collections*, &c.: Cambridge, 1898) has remarked that Ps. xiv. 1–3 closely resembles the general condemnation of 'all flesh upon the earth' in Gen. vi. 5, 12.

the New Testament have frequently affected the Greek text of the Old, so here this conglomerate of quotations came to be attached altogether to Ps. xiv in some Greek MSS., increasing it by four verses. Thence they passed into the later Latin Vulgate. Thence into Coverdale's Bible and into the Great Bible, and so into the Prayer Book version of the Psalms. But our present Bible version remains true to the Hebrew original.

2. 'To be justified,' in ver. 20, means to be acquitted, or proved righteous, or reckoned righteous in the trial before God. This, and not to *make* righteous, is the meaning of the word 'to justify,' both in the Old and New Testament and elsewhere. There is scarcely an exception. It is a forensic word, that is, a word derived from processes of law, and it describes the favourable verdict after a trial. It is used of vindicating God's character to His people[1], or of vindicating one's own character; of God's judicial acceptance of men or men's judicial acceptance of one another[2]. And so far as real righteousness is necessary for judicial

[1] Cf. above ver. 4, from Ps. xxxii.

[2] See Ps. li. 4; Job xxxii. 2; Prov. xvii. 15; Isa. v. 23; Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 29; x. 29; xvi. 15.

acquittal, the word implies real righteousness, but it does not primarily mean it.

3. Here we find briefly stated St. Paul's apparently wholly original view of 'the law,' as given simply to enlighten the conscience by keeping men informed as to their duty, without supplying them with any moral assistance in performing it. Thus the ultimate aim of the law was to make man know his own sinfulness; to convince him that his attempted independence was a failure, and that he could not save himself; and so to prepare him to cry out for the gift of grace, and to welcome it when it was given. 'The law was given,' as St. Augustine is fond of saying, 'that grace might be sought, and grace was given that the law might be kept.' This antithesis is thoroughly after St. Paul's mind.

This first division of our epistle gives us as a whole a great deal to think about. There are, we may say, two spiritual evils conspicuous to-day. People with consciences in any degree awakened are apt to be nervous, anxious, despondent, complaining, sullen. The second division of our epistle supplies the antidote to this error by consolidating the awakened conscience in divine peace. But there is another,

and perhaps more conspicuous, spiritual evil of our day which this first division is calculated to meet—the habit of excusing oneself—the absence of the sense of sin.

> Hold thou the good: define it well:
> For fear divine philosophy
> Should push beyond her mark, and be
> Procuress to the lords of hell.

Because philosophy and science have been bringing into prominence the influence of heredity and physical environment on character, we use this consideration, and often with little enough knowledge of real science, to obliterate the sense of sin. We are apt to regard sin as it appears in the world at large as a result of ignorance, or social conditions—as in one way or another a form of misfortune. And so viewing it in the world, we view it in ourselves. We make excuses for ourselves. We have largely lost the sense that sin is wilfulness; that it is an inexcusable offence against God; that it does, and necessarily does, bring us under God's indignation; that necessarily, because God is what He is, the consequences of sin in this life, and much more beyond this life, are inconceivably terrible. It is this sense of sin that St. Paul must help to restore in us. We must believe

that God is holy, and we must learn to tremble under His necessary holiness, before we can in any right sense realize that He is loving. We must learn once again to be really penitent; to confess our sins in general and in particular with utter humiliation; to expect the divine judgement upon them; to use with reality the stern language about sin of the Bible and the Prayer Book. And learning this for ourselves with regard to our own personal sins, we must learn also to feel, like Daniel, what our church and nation deserve in God's sight. We must confess our own sins and the sins of church and nation [1]—aye, of the human race. Only through such a restoration of evangelical severity can there be a restoration of evangelical joy. The deepened sense of personal sin is the needful step to spiritual progress. Certainly no more in our case than in that of the Jews will orthodoxy, or ritual accuracy, or frequent services, or superior education, or philanthropic zeal, be accepted as a substitute for moral severity, for the spirit of penitence and the readiness for penance. Let us judge ourselves, brethren, that we be not judged of the Lord.

And it is all-important what our standard of

[1] Cf. Dan. ix. 4–20.

judgement is. The Jews failed because they judged themselves by a mainly external and therefore easy standard. So do most respectable Englishmen. We are satisfied if we do nothing discreditable. But the religious sense of sin, as it is experienced by the psalmists, or St. Paul, or Luther, or John Keble, arises from the intense perception of a personal relation to the All-Holy. The 'falling short,' or rather 'experienced need[1],' of which St. Paul goes on to speak, is the experienced need of something very lofty, to which it is possible for men to be quite insensible—'the glory of God.' God's divine brightness, the eternal light, streams forth into nature. 'The whole earth is full of His glory.' Man also in his natural and moral being is meant to have fellowship with God. He is meant for the divine glory also. It is in proportion as he realizes what he was meant for, and becomes conscious in himself of a capacity for God, that his present actual pollution and sinfulness becomes a reality to his consciousness. It is in the light of God,

[1] The word for 'fall short' in ver. 23 is a 'middle' verb, and apparently implies not only failure in point of fact, but conscious failure. Thus in Luke xv. 14, the prodigal son begins to *feel* his destitution (middle). But in Matt. xix. 20, the rich young man asks, 'What, as a matter of fact, is wanting to me' (active)? See Gifford, or S. and H. *in loc.*

and in aspiration after the glory of God, that the sense of sin really awakens. 'Thou requirest truth in the inward parts,' says the Psalmist. 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.' 'If thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss, Lord, who may abide it?'[1]

[1] Cf. app. note C, on recent reactions from the teaching about hell.

DIVISION II. Chapters III. 21—IV. 25.

Justification by faith only.

§ 1. (III. 21–31.)

Christ our propitiation.

Now we have been brought to recognize the true state of the case as between ourselves and God—the facts about ourselves as we are in God's sight. We were meant for fellowship in the divine glory. 'The glory of God,' says an old Father, 'is the living man: the life of man is the vision of God.' But, meant for fellowship in the divine glory, we have fallen short of it and have come to appreciate our failure. We have sinned, and that universally and wilfully. We are such that God cannot accept us as we are: the 'day of His appearing' could be for us but a 'day of wrath.' And in this dire situation we are helpless. We can supply no remedy. 'Can the Ethiopian change his

skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil[1].' But to acknowledge this—to abandon the claim so dear to the human heart, that we can be independent and manage our own life successfully: to repudiate all our false pride, and to come before God all of us on the same level, confessing our failure and our sin—this is to let man's necessity be God's opportunity, and to open the flood-gates of the divine righteousness.

God is righteous in all the richest meaning of that word, and that righteousness of His He is now extending to us and giving us admittance into it. And this He does purely and simply as His gift. On His side it is pure and gratuitous giving, on our side simple and unmeritorious receiving. We contribute nothing. No distinctions are admitted between those inside the law and those outside it. The gift is quite apart from the law, though law and prophets bore witness to it. No questions are admitted as to what we have done or what we have left undone. Purely and simply out of the freedom of His love, who is our Creator and our Father, now, when a bitter experience has taught us again our true attitude towards Him, He offers us

[1] Jer. xiii. 23.

admission into His righteousness, all on the same level, if we will simply believe in Jesus Christ His Son, that is, take Him at His word and believe His promises (vers. 21–24).

And what is this offer? It is, first of all, what befits the captives of sin: it is redemption. God, who of old bought His people out of captivity in Egypt, without any co-operation of theirs, by a pure act of His power, has now again, without any co-operation of ours, but by a manifestation this time of self-sacrificing love, in the person of Jesus Christ, bought our freedom from sin. And this redemption He offers to us first of all in the form which befits sinners conscious of sin and guilt, as the mere gift of forgiveness, the mere power to break with the past, the mere right to stand and face the future with a clean record. For as the brazen serpent was lifted up before the eyes of rebellious Israel, bitten of the fiery serpents, and those who looked unto it lived, so upon the open stage of history God set forth Jesus Christ shedding His life-blood—obedient, that is, to God and righteousness unto death, even the death of the cross. And this sacrificial shedding of the life-blood of the Son of God—to which we

contributed nothing[1]—is accepted by the Father as propitiatory, that is, as something which enables Him to show His true character of righteousness, and to acquit or accept among the righteous, irrespective of what he has done or been, every one who has faith in Jesus (vers. 24-26).

And why (we in our age are disposed to ask) did not God simply declare His forgiveness? why this roundabout method of a propitiatory sacrifice? It was (St. Paul's language suggests) to prove or vindicate His righteousness, which means both holiness and mercy. All the long ages past of the times of ignorance, God had been 'overlooking' or 'passing over' sins in His forbearance, never 'suffering His whole displeasure to arise,' but allowing all nations to walk in their own ways and to find out their own mistakes and helplessness[2]. The result of their being thus left to themselves was that men did indeed become conscious of their misery

[1] Except the sins which slew Him.

[2] I have combined this passage with the illustrative passages in St. Paul's speeches to the heathen. Acts xiv. 16: 'Who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways.' Acts xvii. 30: 'The times of ignorance God overlooked (winked at); but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent.' Wisd. xl. 23: 'Thou overlookest (winkest at) the sins of men to the end they may repent.'

and need, but also came to entertain all sorts of slack or unworthy ideas about God. A mere declaration of forgiveness might have left men with an impression of an easy-going or 'good-natured' God who would make light of sin. But the awful burden laid upon Jesus on account of human sin, the awful sacrifice of His life which He readily offered, restores the sterner element to our thoughts about God, just at that crisis or opportunity in the divine dealings, when by God's declaration of free forgiveness we are made to feel His love. God does forgive us, but it costs Him much. And no one who under these conditions comes and takes at the hand of Jesus the gift of pardon can fail to receive with it the awful impression of the divine holiness and of the severity of the divine requirements. All the former 'passing over of the sins done aforetime' was made morally possible because God had in view that 'now at the present season,' or opportunity, He would 'show,' or prove, His whole righteousness, and be before men's eyes the righteous being that He is in fact (righteous rather than merely 'just'); and be able, without the danger of a great misunderstanding, to give His righteousness full scope by admitting into

it, by a pure act of pardon, every one who comes simply taking Jesus at His word[1].

Here then there is no room for pride or glorying. It is utterly excluded because there is here no consideration of human merit. It is a pure and unmerited boon of the divine bounty bestowed, without reference to any law known or observed, simply on those who, utterly confessing their need, accept in faith the offer of love. Again there is no reference to any chosen race. Jew and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision, are all in the same case. All have the same need. God is the same, with the same offer, for all alike. He will accept the Jew because he believes, and He will accept the Gentile with no other equipment but his faith. Yet this principle of faith involves no repudiation of the principle of law; rather, it realizes the very end which law was intended to serve (vers. 27–31).

But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there

[1] This paragraph gives distinctness to a somewhat latent thought in vers. 25, 26. But I feel convinced that this, and nothing else, is the thought.

is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth *to be* a propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to shew his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the shewing, *I say*, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus. Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith. We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Or is God *the God* of Jews only? is he not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also: if so be that God is one, and he shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law.

i.

For our understanding of this famous passage a good deal depends on our fixing, as exactly as possible, what the 'righteousness of God' here spoken of means. Beyond all question it means in part God's own moral character. This is quite certain, as in the Bible generally, so in this very chapter[1]. But it is also certain that God's character is, especially in this epistle, viewed as revealed to us in such a sense that we can take hold of it and become identified with it.

[1] Verses 5, 25, 26.

Thus (especially in i. 17) *human* faith is spoken of as the starting-point or region for revealing divine righteousness. It extends to and embraces the believers[1]. It is a righteousness communicated to us from God on the basis of faith[2]. The 'righteousness of God' is what we men are to become[3]. This transition of meaning from what God is in Himself to what we are by the gift of God is of course thoroughly natural. The grand idea of the Bible is that of a moral fellowship between man and God. The grand idea of the New Testament is, further, that of a disclosure and communication to us of the divine life.

And what is this moral quality described by 'righteousness' which belongs to God and is communicated to us? Righteousness is a term belonging primarily to man. A righteous man, in the Old Testament, is one who fulfils all that is expected of him, one who is blameless—towards man, but especially towards God. But if God expects such and such conduct in men it is because of what He Himself is. His requirements express His character. God Himself therefore is believed to be righteous, incorruptibly and awfully righteous. But a great

[1] Rom. iii. 22. [2] Phil. iii. 9. [3] 2 Cor. v. 21.

strain is put upon this belief in the 'wild and irregular scene' of this world, the Governor of which appears so often indifferent to the sufferings of His most faithful servants. Thus the righteous cry out to God to vindicate Himself, and God's righteousness is, in the Old Testament, largely identified with God's vindication of His own character by righteous acts or judgements accomplished in the past or expected in the future; acts of such a character as that in them the wicked and insolent are put to confusion, and the meek and holy justified and exalted. Such righteous judgement is expected to characterize the kingdom of the Christ. Of course, in the general lowering of moral ideals among the Pharisaic Jews, the idea of righteousness suffered with all else. The righteous came to mean those who strictly keep the outward Jewish law; and God's righteousness was identified with His expected vindication of those who keep the law, i. e. the pious Jew, at the coming of the Messiah[1]. Our Lord, and His disciples after Him, were engaged in nothing so much as in deepening the idea of righteousness again. Especially it is something much more than the mere observance of outward ordinances.

[1] Rom. ix. 31.

It was, in fact, the fundamental error of the Jews to confuse the two. Righteousness in man must be real likeness to God, and God's righteousness is His holy character which He is now once more manifesting in the gospel of His Son; a character which is still shown in acts of justice[1], in punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous, but which manifests itself also more especially as love, and by gracious promises of forgiveness and acceptance[2]. Thus, in Rom. i. 17, 18, the present 'revelation of divine righteousness' is a gracious manifestation which is put in contrast to the 'revelation of divine wrath,' the place of which it is intended to take. And yet, though the quality of mercy is made emphatic, it is not isolated. God's righteousness is not mere good nature. It would not be rightly revealed by any mere ignoring or passing over of sin. God's mercy is inseparable from His holiness, and His righteousness includes both[3]. It needed the severe requirement of the atoning sacrifice, as well as

[1] Rom. ii. 5.

[2] Cf. 1 John i. 9: 'Faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins.'

[3] Joseph, the 'righteous' man in Matt. i. 19, is kindly. But his kindliness has still the elements of moral severity. And it must be remembered that in Rom v. 7 'righteous' is still put in contrast to 'good.'

the free gift of forgiveness and new life, to prove or exhibit it.

And if God's righteousness shows itself first of all in a simple act of justification of sinners—in simply forgiving men or pronouncing them righteous, irrespective of what they are in themselves at the moment, if only they will take God at His word—three points have to be borne in mind. First, that the mere offer of forgiveness is put in the forefront because this readiness on our part to be treated as helpless sinners is the annihilation of the one great obstacle to our reconciliation with God—the proud independence which led the Jews, and has led men since their day, to resent being dealt with by mere mercy, and to want to justify themselves. If the Christian character is to grow aright, it must have its root in an utter acknowledgement that we owe to God our power even to make a beginning in His service: that we can run the way of His commandments, because, and only because, He by His own act has set our hearts at liberty.

> Just as I am, without one plea
> But that Thy blood was shed for me,
> And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
> O Lamb of God, I come!

To many really good Christians this sort of language has come to have an unreal sound because they have been surfeited with it, and because it has been associated with a very one-sided Christianity. But, for all that, the moral necessity remains that we should dig out of its last refuges the claim of human independence, if the Christian character is to grow healthily. In other words, the only root of Christian thankfulness and progress is the recognition that our spiritual life rests at its basis on a pure act of the divine bounty in accomplishing our redemption from sin and giving us the forgiveness of all our sins.

Secondly, it must be borne in mind that our forgiveness through the sacrifice is only the first step towards fellowship with God. It is only the removal of the preliminary obstacle which guilt had raised against actual admittance into the life of God. The language of the New Testament refuses to allow us to separate the forgiveness of our sins from our admission into the 'body of Christ' by baptism[1], or, in other words, our incorporation into the life of the redeemed people, the new Israel. For the faith

[1] See Acts ii. 38: 'Be baptized . . . unto the remission of your sins.' xxii. 16: 'Be baptized and wash away thy sins.'

which accepts forgiveness is the same identical quality which corresponds with all the later movement of the new life. God's free gift of grace is not forgiveness only, but forgiveness and new life; it is 'forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ[1].' St. Paul does not contemplate, or contemplates only to repudiate, a faith which accepts forgiveness and stops there—indifferent to actual holiness or baptismal incorporation. For it would be no real faith at all. The preliminary justification or acquittal is simply and solely to serve as a basis for the life of consecration and glory. The stages of justification and sanctification are separable in idea but not in fact. The refusal to proceed from the threshold of the acquittal into the palace of the new life would expel even from the threshold; even as the failure of the unthankful servant to behave as one should behave who has been excused the debt he could not pay, cancelled all his acquittal and left him with the weight of the old debt rolled back upon him to his destruction.

Lastly, and in one word, it must never be left out of sight that even the initial movement of

[1] Acts xxvi. 18, i.e. forgiveness and fellowship in the consecrated body, the new Israel; cf. xx. 32.

faith, the taking Christ at His word and believing His promises, involves the element of moral allegiance. His gracious person and character attract even while the boon is being accepted, and a new motive enters into life. Justifying faith at its very root is a faith which yields allegiance to its object.

ii.

To a Jew, and to almost all races when St. Paul wrote, the idea of an expiatory sacrifice for sin seemed natural and obvious. But for the special Christian doctrine of expiation the basis is to be found in the memorable chapter liii of the 'later Isaiah.' That great prophet of the captivity is assuring Israel of their restoration to their own land. This restoration is to follow on the due punishment of her sins—'She hath received of the Lord's hands double for all her sins.' And the restored people is to be, before all else, a righteous people—'all righteous'—a people of God's favour, because they are living according to God. But there is so much sin still remaining in them as to make it necessary that the new life of the recovered people should be based on a great act of pro-

pitiation. The Righteous Servant of Jehovah, who is, at starting, the idealized people itself, but who comes to be represented as an individual acting for the people while repudiated by them, offers his life a willing sacrifice for their sins. The chastisement of their iniquities falls on him, and he accepts the burden, and is obedient unto death. Dying he makes his soul a guilt offering: and, living through death exalted and powerful, he becomes an intercessor accepted with God, the head of a new seed whom he 'justifies' before God by the intimate knowledge of God's mind and character which in his voluntary humiliation he has won. This wonderful prophetic picture represents a vast advance in moral teaching on what had gone before. It is not only that the self-sacrifice of a perfect human will is substituted for the animal victims to which the enlightened conscience of God's people already refused to allow any real efficacy; but also that the idea of propitiation is put in a context where it is made plain that it can only be the prelude to a state of actual righteousness in those who are to be justified by it. It occurs as part of the answer to the question, not—How is Israel to escape punishment? but, How is Israel to

become the really righteous nation, living in the likeness of God?

In the later books of the Maccabees we have this idea of the expiatory sacrifice and intercession of the ideal Israelite still retained, but degraded, probably under Greek influences. 'And I, as my brethren,' says the Maccabean martyr, 'give up both body and soul for the laws of our fathers, calling upon God that he may speedily become gracious to the nation . . . and that in me and my brethren may be stayed the wrath of the Almighty, which hath been justly brought upon our whole race[1].' 'Be propitious to my race,' prays Eleazar, in another Alexandrian version of the story, 'being satisfied with our punishment on their behalf. Make my blood a propitiation for them, and receive my life as a substitute for theirs[2].' These passages are on a lower moral level than Isaiah's, because in them the prominent idea of propitiation is that it is a means of procuring from God exemption from further punishment, not a step to the restoration to holiness. The idea both of what God desires and of what man desires is lower. And indeed all conceptions of propitiation may be distinguished into true

[1] 2 Macc. vii. 37. [2] 4 Macc. vi. 28, 29.

or false, according as righteousness or exemption from punishment is the end which is specially in view.

Thus when we pass on into the New Testament we find in Caiaphas' saying, 'It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not[1],' the typical expression of the quite immoral notion[2] of the forcible sacrifice of an innocent person in order to exempt a guilty race from punishment. In our Lord's teaching, on the other hand, we find the doctrine of atonement raised to its highest moral power. As the Forerunner had revived the teaching of the later Isaiah by pointing to Him as 'the Lamb of God who taketh away (i. e. taketh up and expiateth) the sin of the world[3],' so Christ Himself spoke unmistakeably of the new covenant which He came to inaugurate, as to be based upon the sacrificial offering of His body and the outpouring of His blood[4]: spoke also of 'the remission of sins' as the benefit to be expected

[1] John xi. 50.

[2] None the less immoral as Caiaphas intended it, because, as St. John perceives, a divine truth uttered itself through his lips (John xi. 51).

[3] John i. 29.

[4] Matt. xxvi. 28; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24.

from His expiation. But no teacher in the world ever made it so plain that God can be satisfied with nothing that any other can do for us—with nothing but actual likeness to Him in ourselves. No teacher ever made it so plain that what we are to desire is not to be let off punishment, but to be actually freed from sin. He left no room for doubt that only by following His steps, even to the cross and surrender of our lives, can we share His fellowship. The very life which is offered in sacrifice to lay the foundation of the new covenant is a life or spirit which we are to share. We are to eat and drink His sacrificed flesh and blood—the blood which is the life—and so to be one with Him and He with us. He sacrificed Himself, in other words, in order to make possible, through His life and Spirit, a new covenanted society, in which men should have perfect fellowship with God and with one another. He did not reject the idea of a propitiation won for man by His vicarious sacrifice—the truth is far from that—but He keeps it in inseparable connexion with the life which is to be based upon it; and in the eucharist He brought back the idea of sacrifice to what had been its starting-point in all primitive usages. 'The one point,' says Pro-

fessor Robertson-Smith, 'that comes out clear and strong (from the examination of ancient sacrificial customs), is that the fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is sacramental communion, and that all atoning rites are ultimately to be regarded as owing their efficacy to a communication of divine life to the worshipper, and to the establishment or confirmation of a living bond between them and their God[1].'

Still Christ's sacrifice of propitiation, to which we contribute nothing, in which we do not share, remains a necessary prelude to the establishment of the new life. It is in virtue of this that we are justified and accepted and allowed to start afresh. This fact the New Testament in general takes for granted, and offers no explanation of it; as indeed the human heart has in general accepted the benefit in all thankfulness and asked no questions. But the speculative modern intellect has found a difficulty in the matter—in the matter at least as commonly represented—and we have noticed that a suggestion of explanation is made by St. Paul in this passage. God had long gone on 'passing over' sin all over the world in loving forbearance, bearing with all men's sinfulness,

[1] Robertson-Smith, *Religion of the Semites* (Black, 1889), p. 418.

till they had thoroughly learnt the lesson of their own need of God and inability to save themselves. But this very forbearance rendered God's character liable to complete misunderstanding. He might have been supposed to be kind indeed, but indifferent to sin. 'These things hast thou done and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself[1].' Thus the severity manifested in the claim of the 'righteous Father' upon the Son of Man, His claim of an obedience unto the shedding of His blood, and the ready response to His claim on the part of the Son of Man gladly rendering up His life in homage to the Father—these taken together, the claim of the Father and the sacrifice of the Son, vindicated within the area of the Christian faith the true character of God, and forced the believer in Jesus to hold the severity and the love in their inseparable unity as making up the divine righteousness.

Does not this thought open at least an intelligible vista into the mystery of the Atonement? Christ is the Son of Man. He is to inaugurate the true manhood. But first He must deal with the manhood that has gone

[1] Ps. l. 21; cf. Eccles. viii. 11.

astray, and make an act of reparation to the Father for all the outrage that our sins have done Him. Thus in contrast to all our self-pleasing, self-indulgence, self-excusing, in contrast to all our clamorous insolence towards God and indifference to His laws, we behold the Son of Man recognizing the Father's strict requirements, and lifting before His eyes, in the name of the manhood which He represents, the great reparation of an unshrinking obedience and loyalty unto death. The Father spared not His only Son the natural consequences of obedience in a world of sin. The Son spared not Himself, but shed His blood—the 'blood which is the life'—at the Father's will. This is the one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. It is the sacrifice offered in the power of nothing less than 'eternal spirit.' Henceforth, then, no man can come to God in faith in Jesus, in the faith which even at its root is moral allegiance, and think lightly either of God's holiness or of his own or others' sin. God forgives him his sin, but it cost Him much to forgive it. The Cross is the measure of the antipathy between God and sin.

And it is well to notice how the great

thought of this passage is made intelligible to the ordinary English reader again, only by the Revised Version. In the old Bible the word signifying 'passing over' of sins is translated 'remission'—the very thing with which it is in fact contrasted. It is not an exaggeration to say that, in this and very many places of the epistles, the Revised Version for the first time renders the thought of the apostles again intelligible to the English reader. And if the Revised Version is not popular, as the booksellers tell us it is not, this is, I fear, only a sign that the majority of English Christians do not really care to *understand* the meaning of the message with which, as a matter of words, they are so familiar.

iii.

The metaphor of 'redemption' and the metaphor of 'propitiation' complete and check one another. As in the parables it is only the exact point of comparison between the earthly and the heavenly which can be pressed for the spiritual lesson, so it is with these metaphorical words, which are in fact parables compressed. The word 'redemption' is meant to suggest a price paid by God, or by Christ, for our being

made free; it is the price of the Son's death. He 'gives His life a ransom for many.' The word 'propitiation' again is meant to suggest that the offering of the life in sacrifice was the means to win for us forgiveness from God. So far, both metaphorical words have their clear and harmonious meaning. But in old days the metaphor of redemption was worked out by Origen and others beyond the exact point of the original suggestion. The price, they argued, must have been paid to the enemy who held us captive; i. e. Christ's life was offered as a price to the devil in order that his claim might be satisfied and we might be justly set free. But this extension of the scope of the metaphor is wholly alien to the New Testament. On the other hand, the idea of propitiation has suggested at many periods the horrible notion that the Son wrung from the angry Father the pardon which He was unwilling to give. Such a notion is again wholly alien to the New Testament. But in fact the two metaphors are mutually corrective; and each tends to exclude the misuse of the other. The idea that Christ offered anything to the devil is corrected by the notion inherent in the phrase 'propitiation (of the Father).' What the Son offered was a sacrifice

directed to the Father only. On the other hand, the idea that the mind of the Father needed to be changed towards us, is corrected by the suggestion inherent in the other metaphor of redemption; for it is He who, because He loved us, gave up His own Son to buy us out of the slavery of sin. Each metaphor suggests a single idea—each complementary of the other, and corrective of its misuse—and both combine to tell us of the one inseparable love of the Father and the Son, uniting in a sacrificial act which is ascribed to both, to redeem us from the tyranny of sin and to set the pardoning love free to work upon us, without obscuring the true hatefulness of sin or the true character of God.

If, especially recently, the doctrine of the atonement[1] has involved intellectual difficulty, on the other hand it has proved itself, as the popular Christian literature of all ages sufficiently shows, widely and deeply welcome to the human heart. This wide welcome which it has received shows that it contains a deep truth. And from this point of view, from the point of view of our practical spiritual needs, we do well to meditate

[1] On some of the difficulties felt about the doctrine of the Atonement, see app. note D.

much and deeply upon this doctrine. We can depend upon it, that if we are to go on patiently doing good in a world like this, so full of disappointments and anxieties and moral failures and torturing scruples, we must have peace at the heart. And this is what the really evangelical doctrine is capable of giving us. It bids us continually look out of ourselves up to God, and assures us that His love, manifested in the sacrifice of His Son, is there continually, unchangeably. It is there, waiting till first we turn to Him, to give us the assurance of entire absolution and admission into the divine fellowship, wholly irrespective of what we have been or done; and it is there continually, however often we fall, with the same large and liberal hand to pour out continual forgivenesses, and never wearies of restoring us again and again to the solid foundation of the peace and grace which are by Jesus Christ. We are not meant to be miserably anxious or morbidly introspective. We must confess our sins, and that with exactness, without self-sparing, without self-excusing, in utter humility and truth; but 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

DIVISION II. § 2. Chapter IV.

The true seed of Abraham.

St. Paul has been repudiating the principle of justification by works of the law. To those with whom he had been brought up, this was in the highest degree to dishonour the Jewish law, and indeed the principle of divinely-given law at all. But in the last words of the previous chapter he refuses to admit this inference. 'God forbid that we should make law of none effect. Nay, we establish law.'

This idea of the Gospel, rightly understood, establishing the law even while it superseded it, is with St. Paul a very favourite one, and he elaborates it in different ways. Sometimes he shows how the function of the written law, or 'the letter,' is only to awaken the conscience and make men know their sinfulness. It can give men no help in corresponding to the moral requirement which it expresses. Having con-

victed the conscience of sin, it has done its work, and must yield its place to a more effective spiritual agency. The letter killeth, in order that the Spirit may give life to those whom it has killed. And, on the other hand, the one object of this new spiritual agency, this life-giving Spirit, is to infuse the power of moral obedience, which the law could not give, into men's lives, 'that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk after the Spirit.' In this place, however, St. Paul only alludes to this argument and in the main adopts another. He shows from the Book of the Law, that the father of the faithful, himself the typical instance of a justified man, was justified, not by works which he had done, but simply because he believed; not upon the basis of any law or covenant, but as a man simply and not as a circumcised man; and again, that David, the man after God's own heart, living under the law, would have us rest our hopes of blessedness, not on our merits as having kept the law, but simply on the forgiving bounty of divine grace.

Let us inquire, he says, into the case of Abraham, whom we Jews are proud to own for our national ancestor. What are we to say of him? If Abraham approached God in virtue

of his merits in having kept a law, and so was accepted by God because of what he had done of himself, there is something for him to boast of. But this in fact is not his relation to God according to the scripture at all. There—

> 'merit lives from man to man,
> But not from man, O Lord, to thee.'

The whole initiation is God's. He simply makes a promise of His own pure goodwill—'Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven'—and Abraham simply believed Him; and this, and nothing but this, was 'counted to him for righteousness[1].' The two suggested relations of Abraham to God are broadly contrasted and can be generally applied. In the one case you have a compact between God who imposes, and man who accepts, an allotted task with a payment attached to its fulfilment. If the man fulfils it, his payment can be classed as due to him under the compact. In the other case you have nothing done, no claim alleged, but a pure act of God, accepting one of our sinful race, as he is, simply because he takes God at His word. And this is how David also views our relation to God. You find him[2] opening his mouth to tell

[1] Gen. xv. 5, 6. [2] Ps. xxxii.

us what sort of man is truly blessed, truly to be congratulated. And he thinks not of one who claims a reward because of his merit, but of one who has found no comfort or resource except in penitent confession of his sins, and whose sins God has forgiven and has consented to treat as if they did not exist. It is the unmerited act of the divine bounty, it is God justifying the sinful, which is the source of blessedness (vers. 1-8).

Now we go back to the case of Abraham to inquire whether the blessing of divine acceptance was pronounced upon him because he was the head of the chosen race marked out by circumcision—which was, so to speak, the first part of the law. No, it was before he was circumcised. The token of circumcision came afterwards [1], as the seal or external confirmation of what he had already received simply as a believing man; so that he might have for his true sons believers, whether uncircumcised or circumcised, and they might share his acceptance simply by believing God as he believed Him (vers. 9-12).

Plainly when God made Abraham the promise that he should be the heir of the world [2], no law

[1] Gen. xvii.

[2] None of the promises are verbally to this effect. But this is the substantial outcome of them.

was introduced into the relationship. It was purely a matter of God promising and Abraham taking God at His word. Indeed it could not have been otherwise. Introduce law, and you introduce a compact between God and man which annuls the relationship of God simply promising and man simply believing—a compact which throws a strain on man's independent powers, which they are not able to bear. The one inevitable result of the law is to put man in the position, in which apart from law he cannot find himself, of a defaulter who knows himself, as a defaulter, under the divine wrath. The true relationship leaves matters in the hands of God, who purely promises of His good favour —man simply in faith receiving (vers. 13–16ª). This resting everything on God's promise and man's faith gives security for the fulfilment of the promise to 'all the seed.' And the 'seed to whom the promise was made' includes, not only the race chosen later to receive the law, but believers of all races; Abraham being in this sense 'a father of many nations,' as he stands under the eyes of God whom he believed in— God who had power to make His promise good, even by recalling to life again the dead faculties of Abraham's old age, and summoning children

which did not yet exist as if they were already there. Here is the point: Abraham believed that God had the power to be as good as His word, in spite of all obvious reasons to the contrary. Therefore he looked the facts steadily in the face—his own and Sarah's great age. But he did not suffer this to weigh in the balance against God's promise. He made quite sure that God would do as He promised, and glorified God by this strong act of faith. This it is that was reckoned to him for righteousness, i.e. this it is that enabled God to accept him as righteous without any consideration of deeds done. And the record of this acceptance is made for our sakes to-day. God is still taking men into the number of the righteous, and He still does it on the same principle. He will reckon us for righteous if we will take Him at His word, and believe in His power to do as He has promised. And in our case He has given us fresh ground for such confident belief; for Jesus, on whom as Lord our hopes rest and who died to make atonement for our sins, He has by His power raised up from the dead, that by faith in Him, dead and yet alive again, we might be taken like Abraham without more ado into the number of the righteous.

What then shall we say[1] that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, *saying*,

> Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,
> And whose sins are covered.
> Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin.

Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness. How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision: and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them; and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision. For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are

[1] Or 'of Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh' (margin).

of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect: for the law worketh wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression. For this cause *it is* of faith, that *it may be* according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb: yea, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.

1. No doubt, on the text of Gen. xv. 6, St. Paul is right. It was Abraham's *faith* that is declared to have been reckoned to his account by God as equivalent to righteousness. But when we get beyond a mere text, is it not, we are inclined to ask, more true to the general

spirit of scripture to say, with the author of the First Book of the Maccabees, 'Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness[1]?' or with St. James, 'Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect[2].' No doubt certain Rabbis state the principle pedantically when they speak of Abraham having kept the whole Mosaic law by anticipation[3], but is it not true to say that Abraham was accepted by God, and on the whole is represented in the Bible as so accepted, *not* only because he believed, but also because he 'was found faithful in temptation,' and did good works, or acted as a good man?

Now, if by 'accepted' is meant 'finally accepted,' St. Paul would say this as of Abraham, so of every other accepted man. He must be finally judged and must receive according to his works or character. As we shall see, there is no real discrepancy between St. Paul and St. James on this matter. And St. Paul never disparages 'good works' which are the fruit of

[1] 1 Macc. ii. 52, cf. Ecclus. xliv. 20.
[2] James ii. 21, 22.
[3] Cf. S. and H. p. 101.

faith, only 'works' or 'works of the law' which represent a false attitude of man to God. But the question which he is here asking is, What is the ground of acceptance for a man *at starting*? What is it puts him at starting in the right relation to God? In other words, What is the root of real righteousness? And his answer to this question is, it is only self-surrendering faith which brought Abraham, or which brings any other man, into acceptance.

In giving this answer St. Paul had in view another attitude with which he had been long familiar, and which he calls 'seeking to be justified by works of the law.' It was the attitude of the Jews, especially as they appear in St. John's Gospel. They were proud of their divine law and of belonging to the chosen people, the children of Abraham and Moses. They knew how to make good their standing-ground with God. By keeping the law, as the law had come to be understood among themselves, they could accumulate merits altogether out of proportion to their failures or demerits. They could even be helped by the merits of the old saints[1]. Thus they could

[1] There is contemporary evidence for this illustration of their position; see *Ephesians*, app. note C.

stand before God on the basis of a certain engagement or covenant, into which God had entered with His people, and claim their due reward.

This utterly demoralizing attitude—leading as it does to formalism and hypocrisy, or, at the best, unprogressive stagnation—this attitude, which left out of sight all the higher and infinite elements in the Old Testament, was the actual attitude of contemporary Pharisaic Jews. The characteristics with which it endowed them were pride in the law; a sense of personal merit coupled with a contempt for 'sinners of the Gentiles,' or the common 'people which knew not the law'; a self-satisfied stagnation which made them utterly resent the new light of the gospel; a regard for the public opinion of their class, which made them slaves to convention; and moral hollowness and rottenness within. It was because this was their attitude that they rejected the Christ. 'Going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.' It was because St. Paul had been brought up in the school of the Pharisees, but had come to perceive its moral rottenness and to accept Jesus as the Christ, that he bases all his doc-

trine on the substitution of justification by faith for justification by works.

By 'works' or 'works of the law' he means an attitude towards God which left a man largely independent of Him. Under the divine covenant the man of the covenant has a certain task to do, a certain law to keep: that kept, especially in its external requirements as contemporary authority enforces it, he is his own master. He is entitled to resent any further claims upon him. This religious ideal means, as we have seen, pride, stagnation, conventionalism, hypocrisy. And the more it is considered the more unnatural it appears. For:

(1) It ignores the fundamental relation of man to God, viz. that, as a creature, he depends absolutely and at every stage on God. He has no initiative in himself. Thus the only attitude towards God which expresses the reality is one in which God is recognized as continually supplying, or promising, or offering, or claiming, and man is continually accepting, or believing, or corresponding, or obeying.

(2) It ignores the ineradicable taint of sin in man, and the accumulated guilt of particular sins. A man may gloss over his inward sinfulness, and cloak and ignore his secret sins; he

may live outwardly in high reputation; but if he comes to know himself, he knows himself as a sinner, who depends, at starting, absolutely on God for forgiveness and 'deliverance from coming wrath.'

(3) It is quite contented to leave all mankind, except a small elect body, out of the conditions of acceptance with God.

In substituting 'faith' for works of the law, then, as the principle of justification, St. Paul was really 'returning to nature'; he was realizing facts, and supplying a basis for a morality both progressive and universal. Further, he was true to all the highest teaching of the Old Testament, which continually finds the source and ground of sin and failure in man's independence of God; which is averse to nothing so conspicuously as to substituting external conformity for moral character; which is heavy with the consciousness of sin; which humbly expects a fuller, wider, and richer disclosure of the kingdom of God. Finally, he was true to that deep and summary teaching of our Lord to the Jews, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' No doubt it may still be said St. Paul argues in an 'uncritical' manner on the basis of a particular

text. But in doing this he was doing as his Jewish contemporaries did; and if the particular text is used to prove a real or true principle, who shall complain of it?

2. And now to conciliate St. Paul and St. James. It is a satisfactory task, for the statements which appear so contradictory admit, when they are examined, of an easy harmony.

Let us suppose, what is highly probable, that the report of St. Paul's teaching reached St. James at Jerusalem at second-hand, in a fragmentary and perverted manner—perhaps as illustrated by unfortunate specimens of its influence where it was wilfully misunderstood. 'Men are justified before God by faith without consideration of works.' St. James' holy and beautiful, but no doubt somewhat unphilosophical mind, was alarmed and scandalized. By faith he understood an intellectual quality—the acceptance of the divine truth revealed; and he points out with the simplicity of moral common sense, that never in the Old Testament is right belief represented as the ground of acceptance with God without the right conduct which is its natural sequence. Who can deny that the devils have a 'right belief' in the existence of God? Faith, in fact, without

works—orthodox belief without moral obedience —is a lifeless form, a body without spirit [1].

To all this St. Paul would of course have agreed, in St. James' sense of the word faith. In fact, St. James' faith, i. e. bare orthodox belief, is closely akin to, and apt to keep company with, formal ecclesiastical observance, which is part of what St. Paul means by 'works.' Both were characteristic of the Pharisaic Jews. St. Paul and St. James would have been at one in saying, 'There must be life in this dead shell of orthodox belief, if it is to have value with God; and what alone can give it life is the real spirit of moral obedience to the will of the holy and good God'—which is what St. James means by 'works.' The disagreement between them is then, so far, only verbal. But St. Paul goes deeper, into a region where St. James does not follow him, and asks what is the real starting-ground of the truest obedience —the real root of the moral life? And he finds this starting-ground, this fundamental establishment of the right relation to God, in what *he* called faith; that is, no mere orthodoxy of intellect, but a fundamental relationship of man towards God—the utterly receptive faculty,

[1] James ii. 14-26.

the profound quality of the self-surrendering will.

3. There is a young philosophical inquirer in Plato's Dialogue of the *Republic* who is so anxious to get at the ultimate principle of justice, as distinct from its consequences and secondary qualities, that Socrates laughingly tells him he is 'scrubbing and polishing it like a statue.' Now St. Paul has the philosopher's instinct to get at a principle in its pure simplicity. He scrubs faith clean of all extraneous accidents. He is most anxious that we should disengage its activity from all the other closely-interconnected elements in human nature; and so perceive that, whatever a man has been or is in race or conduct or antecedents, once let him exhibit faith, the faith which takes God at His word, and by that very fact and no other, all the obstacles to God's acceptance of him are overcome. The true relation of the man to God is restored in its elementary principle. And nothing but this, however elaborate its apparent performances, can restore the fundamental relationship. It is faith only, and not works, however splendid, which justifies or enables God to take a man, place him amongst the righteous, and work upon and in him. But this elemental

act of simply abandoning independence, trampling on pride and taking God at His word, is an act or attitude of the whole man which necessarily (granted that it be not withdrawn) becomes correspondence of the whole being with God, a lifelong obedience, an allegiance and homage of every faculty of will, and emotion, and intellect. 'Faith,' then, as Calvin once said, 'is pregnant with good works, but it justifies before they are brought forth.'

That the rudimentary justifying faith, on which St. Paul is here insisting, is a developing thing, a living and germinating principle, the basis of a life which grows—but always 'from faith to faith,' from one stage of faith to another—will appear clearly enough as we go on. But even here, in this chapter, it appears already that faith is something quite inconsistent with remaining as we are. Faith looks to a divine promise—a promise of astounding change—and believes that God is able to realize it in us. Such was Abraham's faith. Such, we may add, was the faith of those in the Gospels who came to be healed, and to whom it was said, 'According to your faith be it unto you.' Our faith then also must expect and desire some amazing transformation of our human nature

according to a divine promise—nothing less than power out of impotence, life out of death.

And it is from this point of view that the Resurrection is apparently regarded in this chapter, as holding the place it does in the 'scheme' of our justification by faith. We are to believe that God is able to bring life morally out of death. He makes that act of faith possible or easier for us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This evidence of God's power in the case of Jesus, the person on whom our divine faith is to rest, gives an adequate support and reasonable security to our faith. 'He was designated as the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead,' and thus becomes the natural object for such a faith in the power of God to carry out His promises as is necessary for our justification. This is probably the meaning of the particular words with which the fourth chapter closes—'Who died for our sins (that is, in order that, in virtue of His atoning sacrifice, our sins might be forgiven) and rose again for our justification' (i.e. in order that our faith might have in the risen Lord an adequate object). But of course the relation of faith to the risen Lord is by no means exhausted in this thought.

4. We Englishmen are possessed with the idea that there is nothing so alien to our characters as the temper of the Pharisees or the doctrine of the merit of good works. But if we can look at the matter below the surface, we can hardly fail to realize that the spirit which St. Paul so mightily repudiates lies in some respects very close to our natural instincts. The Englishman has a standard, of his class, his college, his profession, which it is his pride not to fall short of; but he is intensely alarmed at any claim upon his moral independence over and above this allowed standard; he is inclined to turn his back completely upon the idea of fundamental surrender to the unknown and infinite claim of God; he is contented with himself and his standard, and occupies himself in comparing it favourably with the standards of other classes, or still more of other nations. But what is this spirit but, for good or for evil, the spirit of Pharisaism under a wholly different dress? 'They going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' 'How can ye believe which seek glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?' 'They measuring themselves by

themselves and comparing themselves amongst themselves are not wise.' Here are typical condemnations of the self-satisfied Pharisaic temper so expressed as to prevent us from supposing that we shall escape condemnation with the Pharisees merely because we do not say long prayers in public places, or distinguish ourselves by a careful ritualism.

DIVISION III. Chapters V–VIII.

The accepted life or the moral consequences of justification.

§ 1. Chapter V. 1–11.

The holy confidence of the justified.

Peace is a fundamental spiritual need of the human soul. But the peace that is God's gift comes only through the breaking up of the peace of soul which comes from ignoring God. The Pharisee on the temple steps was at peace when he thanked God that he was not as other men are—at peace in his misplaced pride. The mass of men in heathen Corinth, where St. Paul was writing, were at peace in their sins. And St. Paul has set himself with all his might, as in his preaching generally, so in this particular letter, to break up this false peace of conscience. Like the prophet of old he spurns those who would 'heal the hurt of the daughter of God's

people lightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.' Thus he has been arousing the conscience of Gentiles and Jews equally, and forcing upon them the conviction that their present life is a condemned life, under the doom of a righteous God. But when the conviction is driven home, when the wound is fairly recognized and probed, comes in due course the healing remedy. It lies in the recognition of what God really is—of the sort of character which He is manifesting now in His Son Jesus Christ. For behold! wholly apart from any question of what we are or have been, God is found waiting for us with the offer of His love, which is also the power to accomplish what He offers. It is pardon and new life He offers to us. It is for us simply to take Him at His word, and without any delay or reckoning up of accounts, to be acquitted and accepted for righteous simply because we have believed His word.

The secure ground of peace in the soul, therefore, lies in the frank and severe recognition of our own sinfulness, but also, and even more, in looking away from ourselves and simply fixing our whole consideration on the character of God, who in certain acts has shown His good-

will toward us, and His power to make His goodwill effectual. All hope for us starts simply from God and His mind of love toward us. 'Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son.'

Thus we find St. Paul, in the passage we are now to consider, beginning a fresh appeal to believers in Christ on this basis, which he has already made so secure. Seeing, he says, that we have now been accepted simply because we believed, let us enter into that heritage of peace which our Lord Jesus Christ by His redemption has won for us. For what is our present condition? Through His redeeming sacrifice we have received an introduction, at no other cost than that of believing, into a new standing-ground before God, a new state in which the whole atmosphere is one of grace or divine favour. We can therefore enjoy a solid peace in the present based on the sure consideration of the divine goodwill, and we can make it our boast that we have a well-grounded hope of future restoration to that highest fruition of which our nature is capable —fellowship in the divine glory. And while we enjoy these present privileges of ours, let us show that we really value them by making

the outward hardships which accompany them a matter of boasting also. For we know that only such hardships, bravely encountered, can give to our characters the quality of steadfastness; and steadfastness through the experience of life makes of us men of approved moral metal; and this process of probation, in which we are tried and not found wanting, again generates hope in us—the same hope in God's love which accompanied the beginning of our justification, only now confirmed in us by our own experience. And this divine hope has nothing treacherous about it[1]. It is grounded on what God has already done. He has already given us His Holy Spirit, and by that gift poured forth His love into our hearts: He would not have done this in order to cheat us at the last.

We can indeed test and measure the mind of God toward us by human comparisons. In our experience of men we might perhaps find some one brave enough even to die for another, if that other was, I do not say merely an upright man, but a good and loveable one. But what is the fact in God's dealings with us? It was

[1] Isa. xxviii. 16: 'He that believeth shall not be put to shame' (Greek version).

when we were sinful and helpless in our sinfulness—nay rather, when we were living in flat antagonism to God—that He proved His own pure love toward us by taking advantage of the divine opportunity to give His Son to die for us. And He, thus dying on our behalf, won for us by the shedding of His blood a reconciliation with God, which lay altogether outside anything which our state naturally suggested. Well then, God would not, so to speak, have gone out of His way to make this beginning, unless He had intended to carry the work through, so as finally to save us out from under the divine wrath, or, in other words, into the divine fellowship. Certainly, accepted as we have been in virtue of Christ's blood-shedding, and thus reconciled to God when our natural state was hostility to Him, we can trust Him, now that He has made us His friends, to accomplish our deliverance, not by any further blood-shedding, but by admitting us into the life of Christ risen from death. But, to end where we began, it is not only the hope of a future deliverance that makes us glad. We also make our boast of our present relation and friendship with God through His Son.

Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but let us also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, probation; and probation, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us. For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath *of God* through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

1. We feel in this passage, and in those which follow, that a great transition is being accomplished, or has been accomplished, in the argument, we hardly know how: the transition from the thought of our preliminary justification or acceptance with God for Christ's sake, to that of our sanctification, or the life consecrated in Christ: the transition from the thought of Christ's work *for us* to that of Christ's work *in us*: from

the gift of acquittal to the gift of the Spirit (ver. 5), and the life of the baptized (vi. 3). St. Paul is not conscious of the transition, as modern theologians or Christians acquainted with theological controversy cannot but be, because the two stages are to his mind absolutely inseparable. Those to whom he wrote had like himself come, with whatever of struggle, to believe in Christ; believing, they had been baptized into Christ, and had received by the laying on of hands the gift of the Holy Ghost. This fellowship in Christ's life, this possession of the Spirit, constituted Christianity. To enjoy these things was to be a Christian. The idea of a Christianity which stopped short of incorporation into Christ, or which claimed this incorporation outside His body which is the Church, and apart from the visible sacramental means of union, did not occur to St. Paul. A Christianity which did not own allegiance to the Church was not in question. But his entire present aim is to convince the heart and reason of Christians that the whole privilege of their new 'state of grace' belongs to them simply in virtue of faith. As he asks the Galatians: 'Received ye the Spirit,' i. e. did ye become Christians, 'by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?' That is his point.

They were not made Christians because they had done anything to deserve it. They were simply helpless sinners, and it was the gratuitous mercy of God which looked upon them and provided a means of forgiveness for them, and justified them or set them upon a new basis of acceptance, without any consideration of what they were or had done, purely and simply because He loved them and meant that the mere spectacle of His unmerited love and bounty should inspire their gratitude and win their hearts. Therefore he lays such emphasis on their initial need of forgiveness: on their helplessness to get rid of their own sins: on their dependence for forgiveness on a sacrifice to which they could contribute nothing: on their being justified by simply receiving in trust the offer of God. But the offer when it is listened to is found to consist in forgiveness indeed—but forgiveness as a step toward new life in the body of Christ. Thus what Christ won for man, what becomes available for each man in virtue of believing the message, is here described as 'our introduction' (rather than 'access') 'into this grace wherein we stand' —an introduction into a spiritual region where God's favour is the prevailing atmosphere, or, to use a later phrase, into 'a state of grace'; a dis-

trict of security out of which, however, men may fall again by deliberate unfaithfulness, as St. Paul warns the Galatians[1]: 'Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace.'

And St. Paul's language does not let us suppose that the whole of what he means by our 'salvation' is included in our preliminary acceptance[2]. That is simply our first introduction into a permanent state. Our 'salvation' is here, as elsewhere, spoken of as equivalent to deliverance from wrath in the day of judgement, which means that our whole moral being has become such as can bear the scrutiny of the divine righteousness and the fellowship of the divine glory.

2. Where the Revised Version above[3] reads 'rejoice,' it is important to remember that the word is that used for the illegitimate 'glorying' or 'boasting' of iii. 27 and iv. 2. Christians have something to boast of, but it is not their own; it is God's gift. Therefore they are especially delighted when God's strength is shown in their weakness, and they will more particularly 'boast of their weaknesses' (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 30).

[1] Gal. v. 4. [2] Cf. also p. 310. [3] verses 2, 3, 11.

3. St Paul's argument that the Christian hope is fundamentally trustworthy is based, we may notice, on a twofold appeal. First (ver. 5), he appeals to the gift of the Spirit which at a definite time[1] each Christian received, doubtless by the laying on of hands. This gift is in itself an outpouring of the divine love and an 'earnest' of future glory (2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5). No doubt almost all the Christians had more or less intensely *felt* the reality of the divine love in the indwelling Spirit. But St. Paul lays stress rather on the fact than on the feeling. Secondly (vers. 6 ff.), he appeals to the great redemptive act of God. God had gone out of His way to make a great sacrifice in order to reconcile us when we were enemies, and therefore may be trusted to carry out the preliminary reconciliation into full spiritual deliverance or salvation by Christ's life. The greater effort carries with it the less.

[1] The tense is an aorist, 'the Holy Ghost which was given' at a definite past moment; not as in the unrevised Bible 'is given.'

DIVISION III. § 2. CHAPTER V. 12-21.

The Second Adam.

ST. PAUL had spoken, at the end of the passage we have just been reading, of our being 'saved by (or 'in') Christ's life.' And this brings him to what is truly the central point of his theology—the life in Christ by the Spirit: the thought that the glorified Man, with all the power of the divine life at work in Him, though He is hidden from sight, is still perpetuating His life by His Spirit in that society which He has established to be His body. It stands to reason that if real fellowship in the life of Christ is the privilege of the Christian, this must be a greater thing by far than any preparatory gift of acquittal or justification, which indeed has its value simply in virtue of that to which it admits us. St. Paul then loves to contrast the new

manhood of believers in Christ, the life in Christ, in all its moral characteristics, with the old manhood, enslaved to sin, as it existed substantially identical in its bondage under the outwardly differing conditions of Gentile and Jewish society. And as that old life of our race had a unity which St. Paul believed was due to a common origin in the first man Adam, so he thought of Christ as a second Adam—the 'last Adam'—a spiritual progenitor from whom was to be derived another human race by spiritual generation with a better unity of its own; or rather a new spiritual progenitor from whom the whole of the old race might gradually derive, by spiritual regeneration, a new life, which should penetrate and spread, and oust the corruption of the old manhood, till the whole was redeemed and ushered into the glory for which it had been originally destined.

And here, in the passage we are now to read, St. Paul develops the thought of the influence of Adam and his sin upon the human race, and draws from it an argument for the deeper and greater influence of the New Man upon the same race, reconstituted under a new head.

Adam's sin—the disobedience of the one man—had a disastrous effect upon his race as a

whole. It introduced sin, and through sin its penalty, death; and it passed to all mankind—the penalty, because also the sin. All men sinned in fact, and all died. This can be stated without exception. It is quite true that where there is no special law to instruct men, they may sin ignorantly, and therefore without its being imputed to them as guilt; yet the sin is there all the same, and its presence, before the Mosaic law was given to enlighten men, was marked by the reign of death, even in the case of persons innocent of any actual sin like Adam's. Sin then, as marked by death, exists universally, apart from any knowledge of it or even any actual offence, as the effect of Adam's transgression upon his whole race. But to Adam corresponds in the divine purpose Christ. He is the new head of the race—to transmit the free gift of life, as Adam transmitted the penalty of death. His life was one summary obedience: one perfectly acceptable object to the eyes of God. And there flows from it an abundant river of the good favour of God—which is also the good favour of the man Jesus Christ—and of the gift by which that good favour shows itself, the gift of righteousness extending on into an eternal life. Therefore we may argue

a fortiori[1] from the influence of Adam to the influence of Christ—[*a fortiori*, because, though God has been, so to speak, constrained to punish us, His whole desire is to do us good; and the method of diffusion which He has allowed to operate for evil, we can be much more sure He will set to work for good][2]. We see the trespass of the one generating universal death, and we are sure that the counter influence of Christ is as universally diffusive and incomparably more powerful. We see the one man's offence appealing to God for judgement and producing a condemned race; but we see, on the other hand, a multitude of sins appealing to the divine compassion to let loose the free gift which shall make for acquittal. If the consequence of the transgression was inevitable, and a reign of death followed, so much more certainly must the divine gift, abundant as it is, bring about the triumph of eternal life. If the one fault diffused itself in universal condemnation, so the one act which meets the divine approval must diffuse itself to produce

[1] An *a fortiori* argument means an argument with a 'still more' in it:—If something is so then *still more* something else.

[2] The words in brackets are the suppressed premiss in the argument—suppressed, but none the less evident.

universally an accepted life. One disobedience made the whole race sinners: one obedience shall make the whole race righteous. The law came in parenthetically to the world of sin and death to let actual sin, like Adam's, have its full and fatal scope. But the greatness of the sin only magnifies still more the greatness of the remedy which divine goodness supplies, that the sovereignty of sin in a world of death might be swallowed up in the sovereignty of divine goodwill working through righteousness unto life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also *is* the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many. And not as through one that sinned, *so* is the gift: for the judgement *came* of one unto condemnation, but the free gift *came* of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, *even* Jesus Christ. So then as through one trespass *the judgement came* unto all men to condem-

nation ; even so through one act of righteousness *the free gift came* unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. And the law came in beside, that the trespass might abound ; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly : that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1. St. Paul in this section, as also in part in his speech at Athens, teaches, as matter which can be assumed and need not be emphasized, that God made 'of one' (Adam) 'every nation of men[1]'; that Adam, by actual transgression of a divine commandment, introduced sin, and with sin death which is its punishment, into the world of man ; and that as a result all men sinned. This universal sin he would, no doubt—as in chapter i, so here—ascribe in part to men's own wills. In this very chapter he asserts that what finally 'abounded' was actual 'transgression' like Adam's[2]. But this is not the whole account of the matter. Prior to all question of actual sins ; prior to all question of knowledge or consequent responsibility, death was universal, and death marked the inward reign

[1] Acts xvii. 26. [2] ver. 20.

of sin. Men in the mass were, through Adam's sin, constituted sinners [1].

St. Paul then, assuming here as elsewhere [2] the narrative of Gen. iii as true in substance if not in form, teaches (1) the unity of our race as derived from Adam; (2) the original transgression of Adam, as being partly the example of subsequent sins and partly the source of a moral corruption, which since his fall has been inherent in our race independently of any actual sins; and (3) the introduction of death *into the human race* as the punishment of sin.

On the other hand, the common idea of an imputation of Adam's guilt to his descendants he expressly does not teach. Sin is not imputed or reckoned as guilt to the individual apart from the knowledge necessary to constitute responsibility [3]. It is extraordinary how the idea of imputed *guilt* can have come to be ascribed to St. Paul when he expressly guards against it. What the descendants of Adam inherit is an actual inherent weakness or sinfulness. Again, St. Paul does not attempt to analyze the actual sin of the world so as to discriminate between the factors of inherited

[1] ver. 13, 14, 19. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 13–15.
[3] Rom. iv. 15; v. 13.

weakness on the one hand and reiterated acts of rebellion on the other; but he recognizes both. His language indeed here, and in chapter vii, would be satisfied by a very moderate doctrine of the effects of original sin, that is, of the transmitted effect of sin, considered apart from its repetition. There is no warrant whatever in St. Paul for the idea that one man's sin resulted in the total depravity of human nature. Once more he is content, as usual, to teach generally and without exactness. Thus he does not consider the exceptions to the universal law of death recorded in the Old Testament—Enoch and Elijah—though he, no doubt, recognized them. That in spite of these exceptions he still states the law with such universality: 'Death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned[1]' is a warning not to understand St. Paul's universal propositions with an exactness only applicable to those of a schoolman or a modern man of science.

2. So much for the substance of St. Paul's teaching; and now what is to be said as to its sources? St. Paul states his doctrine of original sin as if it were a commonplace which he could

[1] Much more (the argument implies) after the law had been given and sin could be 'imputed' as sin again.

assume and argue from. Now the Book of Genesis certainly spoke of a primaeval disobedience in our first parents, and of the infliction on them, as a penalty for their disobedience, of conditions of strife and pain and death. But the idea of the transmission of *sinfulness* does not seem to be suggested. Moreover, this narrative made remarkably little impression on the Old Testament literature as a whole [1]. The doctrine, however, of the introduction of *death* through the temptation and sin of Adam and Eve is found again in the apocryphal literature: thus, 'God created man for incorruption, . . . but by the envy of the devil death entered into the world [2].' 'From a woman was the beginning of sin; and because of her we all die [3].' 'Unto Adam thou gavest thy one commandment, which he transgressed, and immediately thou appointedst death for him and in his generations; and there were born of him nations and tribes, peoples

[1] The references in Hos. vi. 7, Isa. xliii. 27, Job xxxi. 33, are not certainly, or even probably, to Adam. There is an obscure but interesting reference in Ezek. xxviii. 14-16, in which 'the fall' seems to be treated as representative of Tyre's fall, and presumably therefore of all situations in which divine gifts and vocations are squandered and lost.

[2] Wisd. ii. 23, 24; cf. Rom. v. 12.

[3] Ecclus. xxv. 24. The first clause need not mean more than 'she was the first to sin.'

and kindreds, out of number[1].' 'Adam sinned, and death was decreed against those who should be born[2].' This was also the prevalent doctrine of the Rabbis represented in the Talmud. The idea of an inheritance of *moral* corruption—but not specially associated with Adam's fall—may be found in the cry of the Psalmist, 'In sin hath my mother conceived me!' perhaps also in other passages of the Old Testament, and in our Lord's teaching, as recorded both by the Synoptists and in St. John's Gospel[3]; but as connected with Adam's sin it does not, so far as can be ascertained, appear for certain in Jewish literature till we get to the Second Book of Esdras, a Jewish Apocalypse later than St. Paul. There it is taught that there was originally a seed of evil, 'a wicked heart,' in Adam as he was created, side by side with the good in him, and that he by his sin gave it preponderance in the race[4]—a form of teaching not by any means identical with St. Paul's. On the whole, then, it remains a matter of some doubt what exactly was the source

[1] 2 Esdras iii. 7.

[2] *Apoc. Baruch* xxiii. 4, and elsewhere. In parts of this book the penalty of Adam's sin is regarded as being not death, but *premature* death: see liv. 15, lvi. 6, and Mr. Charles' notes.

[3] See Matt. vii. 11; John ii. 25; iii. 3, &c.

[4] 2 Esdras iii. 21, 22; iv. 30; vii. 48.

whence St. Paul got the certainty and completeness of his doctrine of 'the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of Adam.'

3. The more important question for us, however, is not whence St. Paul derived the materials for his teaching, but whether it is true—whether it can hold in the light of modern anthropology. And to this question only a partial answer—the answer that appears to be most necessary—will be attempted here [1].

We are in our generation rightly anxious if we are asked to accept any professedly historical statement for which we feel the evidence is doubtful. We know that from the point of view of history the origin of our human species is lost in dense obscurity and uncertainty. And it relieves many consciences to realize that, if St. Paul states his argument in a form which implies the historical character of the narrative in Genesis iii, all that is necessary for his argument is to assume (1) that the human race is organically one, and can be dealt with as one; (2) that sin is universal in our race; (3) that at least the sting or curse or bondage of death is due to sin. If we realize that this is all that

[1] The matter is to be dealt with more at length in app. note E.

need be allowed in order to give us full fellowship in St. Paul's religious teaching, we shall be able to investigate the further truth of his teaching, from a scientific and historical point of view, with a free mind.

And the three propositions stated above are not reasonably open to doubt. (1) That our race is one species, and derived from one source, is the conclusion of the modern ethnologist as much as of St. Paul[1]. The general theory of evolution has effectively counteracted the previous tendency to postulate the existence of various independent races of men.

(2) There are many professors of psychology who deny the existence of moral freedom and consequently of sin in St. Paul's sense at all. As I have already pointed out, this is the real battle-ground between theology and science. But granted the reality of moral freedom and of

[1] See E. B. Tylor in *Encycl. Brit.* ii, *s. v.* ANTHROPOLOGY, p. 114: 'The polygenist view (i. e. the doctrine of a plurality of origins) till a few years since was gaining ground. Two modern views, however (i. e. the belief in the antiquity of man and the development of species), have tended to restore, though under a new aspect, the doctrine of a single human stock.' Cf. Darwin, *Descent of Man* (2nd ed.), p. 176: 'Those naturalists who admit the principle of evolution . . . will feel no doubt that all the races of men are descended from a single primitive stock.' See also Keane in app. note E.

sin, i.e. of something which need not and ought not to have been committed, it is impossible to deny that, below the innumerable sins of which human history is full, there exists deep in our nature an 'ineradicable taint'—a morbid tendency to do wrong—a bias or propensity to evil—which is the heritage of our race; which indeed men may become unconscious of by acquiescing in sin, but of which they become painfully conscious again as soon as they are awakened to a moral ideal. The late Dr. Mozley collected a remarkable series of passages from what he calls 'worldly philosophers and poets'—notably Byron and Shelley—testifying to the belief in universal sin[1]. This of course we may say is only the inheritance of animal tendencies from an animal ancestry; but if so, it is exactly what our higher spiritual nature might and ought to have subdued long ago and brought into subjection. Its presence with us and in us now is the result of sins innumerable—innumerable wilful preferences of the lower to the higher nature, which have let it loose and given it force. It is, in the strictest sense, the inheritance of sin in the race.

(3) The New Testament frequently reiterates

[1] Mozley's *Lectures and Theol. Papers* (Longmans), pp. 157 ff.

the assertion that Christ has robbed death of its sting or delivered men from its bondage. And this is also expressed (both by St. Paul and by our Lord Himself, as reported by St. John) by saying that Christ has 'abolished death [1]' or that the believer shall never die [2]. But if Christ has abolished death, then there is at least a certain sense in which sin has been the cause of death. The essence of death, according to this use of the word, lies not in the physical transition from one state of existence to another, which is no more death than it is birth. Death means destruction, ruin and collapse. And what is called death—the death of the present body—has only gathered about it such terrible associations because men have become corrupt, and godless and therefore short-sighted in their estimate of life. In the moral sense then in which Christ abolished death, sin certainly introduced it for man.

Now there is, I think, reason to believe more exactly with St. Paul than is involved in these three positions [3]. But I feel sure that any one who accepts these three positions—no one of which any believer in God and morality can well

[1] 2 Tim. i. 10. [2] John vi. 50; viii. 51.

[3] See app. note E.

reject—may find himself in complete practical fellowship with St. Paul's religious thought and with the whole argument of this epistle.

Humanity, in spite of all its racial differences, is a great unity: it is, if not 'of one' individual, yet 'of one blood,' and it is as a whole infected with sin; this is in effect the doctrine of the 'old Adam.' And because it is one, and universally tainted, therefore Christ can deal with it as one, in order to accomplish its restoration. And all St. Paul's argument holds good. God has made humanity one, and so one that what each does tends to affect all. Thus it has come about that the force of sin—the wilful refusal of the higher life and choice of the lower—has passed in its effects into the moral fibre of our race, and weakened and corrupted the whole. God tolerates this, for man must be, and must be dealt with as being, one and free. But God desires the well-being of man. He hates sin. It has all but baffled His purpose for man. Therefore, if He has tolerated the use which sin has made of the organic unity of the human race, He can much more be trusted to use that same unity for the purpose of good. As man is one in sin, so we can be one in righteousness: as the old Adam has been

universal, so can the new. As sin has been propagated physically, so Christ can spiritually propagate the new manhood. The forces of recovery shall spread and permeate more radically than the forces of evil, and shall finally triumph.

Of course, in view of all the deep racial differences between, for instance, Europeans, Chinamen, and the races of India, to believe in the unity of humanity in any real sense at all is a great act of faith. But it is an act of faith in which science encourages us, and not least the comparative study of religions. Our religious instincts and faculties are found in very different degrees of development, but they are fundamentally the same. And it is an act of faith to which Christ and Christianity fundamentally commit us, though it is probably true to say that since New Testament times the brotherhood of men has been practically found to be the most difficult of Christian dogmas.

4. It is not inopportune, in view of recent controversy, to call attention in this connexion to the fact that St. Paul's doctrine of Christ as the second Adam of necessity involves in some form His miraculous birth. St. Paul indeed says nothing about Christ's nativity of

the Virgin as an event in history; but he conceives of the Christ as a fresh start in manhood, a new man, who yet drew the substance of His manhood from the old stock, for He was 'born of a woman,' and 'of the seed of David.' There is thus physical continuity between the old Adam and Christ, and yet, from the moral point of view, the break is complete. The inheritance of sin which has followed, and must according to natural law follow, physical descent, is quite cut off. Christ is man of our old substance and yet new man, wholly free from any taint of sin. This involves a new creative act upon the manhood of Christ in its source. It involves something strictly miraculous conditioning the continuity of His descent from David. There is continuity, and yet a break in continuity. And this is exactly what the strongly-attested fact of the Virgin birth—whatever be the physiological account which is to be given of it—is calculated to supply. It presents us with a Christ born of a woman, of the substance of our nature, and yet only so constituted by a new creative act of God.

5. It will of course be noticed that the drift of St. Paul's argument in this passage is directly towards universal salvation, for 'the many'

means 'the whole mass.' This is the case in other places where he is considering what we may call the natural tendency and scope of the gospel, 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' But there are passages of a different tendency in St. Paul's epistles, where he is considering the human attitude towards the purpose of God; and there he appears to emphasize strongly the power of the human will to refuse the light and turn God's blessing into a curse. If the 'savour' of the apostle's preaching is to 'those who are being saved a savour proceeding from life and tending to life,' even eternal life, it is for the wilful who are perishing in their wilfulness 'a savour as from death and tending to death': for they shall 'suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his might[1].' What this eternal destruction means, and how it is to be harmonized with the vision of unity, we cannot precisely tell. Verily, 'we know' but 'in part.' But at least we must recognize that St. Paul asserts both sides of the picture: and that the 'terror' and the hope are not dissociable.

6. We must also notice, before we leave the

[1] 2 Thess. i. 7-10; 2 Cor. ii. 16.

passage, that the application of the word justification receives a certain extension. As the 'grace' of God is associated with a 'gift of righteousness[1],' that is to say, of real fellowship in the life of God, so the preliminary 'justification of sinners,' in which the divine grace first of all conspicuously shows itself, is to pass into a 'justification of life' (or 'a justification taking effect in life'); that is to say, the actual life is to become acceptable. God begins with accepting sinners and dealing with them as if they were righteous if only they will believe. But it is in view of a moral process which is to produce a new life, and is to end in making acceptable not themselves only, in spite of their lives, but their life itself. The object of the justifying faith is, and must be, as we saw, a living person. It is Christ who was 'raised again for our justification.' And the living Christ can be satisfied with nothing short of a living fellowship between us and Himself in His own life and spirit.

[1] ver. 17.

DIVISION III. § 3. Chapter VI. 1–14.

The Christian life a living by dying.

It has now been made apparent that belief in Christ introduces a man into a new sphere of 'life in Christ' or 'state of grace'—a state, that is, in which the divine grace or goodwill is the atmosphere and motive force. And just as with his natural life he inherited all the taint and curse attaching to sin in the unredeemed manhood, so now in his new state he receives from Christ all the bountiful outpouring, not of acquittal only, but of divine life. What he is called to witness is the triumph of the divine goodwill over the old forces and tendencies of sin in himself and in the world.

But now a monstrous suggestion presents itself, akin to that attempt of the Jew (of which we heard in chapter iii) to claim exemption from the divine judgement on his own sins on the ground that Jewish unfaithfulness had but given

God a background upon which to reveal Himself and His righteousness more effectively. St. Paul, we saw, indignantly crushed that attempt to use logic against conscience. Now, however, a similar suggestion makes itself heard, only from the side not of Jewish factiousness, but of Gentile lawlessness. Would it not give divine grace a still better opportunity to show its quality if, now that we are Christians, we go on living our old life of sin? The more it has got to forgive in us, the more superabundant will its mercy appear. Shall we not then continue in sin that grace may abound? We have other reasons, besides this passage, for believing that St. Paul's teaching about divine grace and justifying faith not only admitted of being misunderstood, but was misunderstood, in his own time[1] as at later periods, in such a way as to cut the roots of moral effort. 'Unlearned and unstable men were wresting his words to their own destruction.' And to any lawless suggestions based upon the misuse of God's free grace, St. Paul had already given the easiest answer when he had laid it down

[1] See Gal. v. 13: 'Only use not your freedom for an occasion of the flesh.' Cf. 2 Pet. iii. 16, and the implications of St. James' Epistle.

as an absolutely universal truth that God will at last 'render to every man according to his works . . . to them that are factious and obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil'; or when he had met the developed logic of the self-excusing Jew with the sharp and final rejoinder —'whose condemnation is just.'

Here however St. Paul gives not the easiest answer to the antinomian suggestion, but a deep, fruitful, and decisive one. He demonstrates the absolute incompatibility of principle between the life of sin and the Christian state. By the very nature of the case no man can belong to both. As St. John said, 'he that is begotten of God' in the new life in Christ 'cannot sin' without thereby abandoning his new standing-ground. At the moment when we became Christians by the act of baptism, we said good-bye to the old life of sin as completely as a dying man says good-bye to the familiar scenes and passes over to 'yonder side.' We were admitted by baptism into Christ Jesus; that is, we were admitted into a certain sort of human life with a certain law or character. What is then the character and law of Christ's life? 'We believe that

Jesus died and rose again[1].' That is the central and summary fact about Him. He passed to life through death. And this physical death of His on the cross was not merely a fact in history, it was a fact with a moral significance[2]. While He had been in this sinful world of ours He had borne its sin, but had no part in it. He was in the sinful world, but not of it. He was to sin and all its motives as one dead. And by His physical death upon the cross He gave summary expression to this moral alienation. He made a final and outward breach with sin, and passed out of its range, for evermore 'separated from sinners.' 'He died to sin once for all.' And the glory of the Father[3] broke forth from its customary concealment and vindicated the Christ by raising Him from the dead, because of what His death had morally meant.

Thus the 'likeness,' or moral counterpart, of Christ's death is to be, like Him, dead to sin. And if we are not called to be physically crucified, we are called to its moral counterpart. We must become morally 'of one growth' with

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 14.

[2] The meaning of ver. 4 is interpreted in vers. 10, 11.

[3] Ver. 4; cf. John xi. 40. 'The glory of God' is specially manifest in the resurrection of the dead.

Christ's death [1], like the slip with the tree it is grafted into. Only so can we share the new life of His resurrection. This is represented in the very ceremony of our baptism. It was impressed upon us by all its outward symbolism that to become a Christian we must die to the old life. We were brought to the margin of the water as to a death, and descended, bowed beneath the waves, as into the tomb with Christ: in order so, and only so, as having died and been buried, to emerge again into the new life under the conditions of which henceforth we are to conduct ourselves [2]. And this new life is not only an actual present fellowship in the risen Christ (ver. 4): it expects to become so (ver. 5) in a fuller and completer measure, but always on the basis of one and the same clear conviction, which we may express thus—When Christ was nailed to the cross, our old sinful manhood was nailed there with Him, so that henceforth our animal nature, hitherto the haunt and stronghold of sin, might be paralyzed and rendered as powerless as any crucified criminal, and we, set free to become new men, might no longer be sin's slaves. That old sinful self of

[1] This is the original suggestion of the word 'united' in ver. 5.
[2] Cf. Col. ii. 12.

ours was put to death, and we passed, as new men, into another life. Henceforth the tyrant sin has no claim on us, for death closes all scores and acquits of all claims. 'The man is dead' is a summary and final plea against all claimants, and that is our plea against the claim of sin. We have died to it once and for all. Therefore, and only therefore, we can hope to share the deathless glory of Christ's resurrection. He died once, and passed henceforth altogether out of death's control. For the death that He died was to make an end with sin, and that was done once for all. Henceforth there is nothing left but life, and that life in the eternal God. This therefore is the view we are to take of ourselves as now included in Christ: we are, in regard to sin, dead men who are no longer responsive to its impulses or alive to its interests: and therefore, in regard to God, we are alive in Christ to whom we are united.

And (ver. 12) the practical duty which follows from this is plain. Christians must not acknowledge a tyrant whose strength and power is gone for ever, by letting sin still reign in the lower part of their nature—the body still subject to physical death—and so bring their higher nature into an unnatural subjection to its appetites: they must

not leave the limbs of their redeemed selves at the disposal of the dethroned king Sin, to be used as weapons for the warfare of iniquity. No: they must correspond to the privileges of the new life in God into which they have passed, by making an offering of themselves[1] to God, with all the free will which befits those who were dead and are alive again; and an offering also of their limbs, now restored to their own control, as weapons for God's warfare of righteousness. Sin shall no longer be their lord. That despotism belonged to the days when they were under the law. Now it is not the law they are under, but the sovereignty of the divine goodwill.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with the likeness of his death, we shall be also with the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *him*, that the body of

[1] The Greek words represented by 'leave at the disposal of,' 'make an offering to,' are different parts of the same verb. 'The tense of the former expresses continuance, habit; . . . of the latter, a single irrevocable act of surrender' (Vaughan, *in loc.*).

sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.

1. In the analysis of the passage given above, the order of the ideas has been somewhat altered, and their meaning expanded, with the intention of rendering the real argument more intelligible; while I believe that no idea is suggested that is foreign to the original. The passage, however, is extraordinarily condensed, and is full of some of the most characteristic of St. Paul's thoughts —amongst them that of the life in Christ as being a living by dying, or a life out of death.

It is impossible to try to lead a human life under any standard that can be called moral without knowing that it involves some sort of 'mortification' of selfish and sensual appetites. There

is that in human nature which, as moralists generally must recognize and in fact have in a measure recognized, must be 'done to death.' It was this principle that was expressed with such terrible vigour by our Lord when He bade us pluck out the offending eye and cut off the offending hand. But the novelty in Christianity was the emphasis which it laid rather on the living than on the dying; it was its teaching as to the infusion into human life of a new and positive spiritual force, which was to overcome evil with good and swallow up death in victory. It was by their belief in a gift of the Spirit imparted to them, and by their resulting power to think and act freely according to God, that the Christians were distinguished from the rest of the world. It is this upon which their apostolic teachers continually insist. 'I have written unto you young men, because ye are strong.' 'As many as are lead by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' It is only as it were in the second place that it appears that this living in the new life will involve dying to an old one. Thus the dying is always made to appear to be in order to a living. The end is always the life. 'I came that they may have life,' our Lord had said, 'and have it abundantly.'

The phrases about dying in order to live have their root in our Lord's teaching, as St. John represents it[1], but belong most characteristically to St. Paul. The principle which they enforce belongs only to a fallen world, for it is only the sin within us and about us that has to be put to death, or to which we have to die. But it finds its highest exemplification in the case of Christ who, sinless Himself, came into a world of sin and lived under its conditions. Therefore He had to 'die' to sin and selfishness in the world in order to 'live' in His own proper life to God. And this dying to sin—this refusing it and repudiating it—is summarily represented in His death upon the cross. The worldly world killed Him because He would have none of its selfishness and sin. He, by voluntarily dying sooner than surrender to the demands of this world, made a final separation of Himself from sin. Thus He lived His life to God at the cost of dying. And this law of Christ's life is to be the law of ours. We must die to sin—not on a visible cross, but by a repudiation of it as thorough and real: nor to sin outside us only, but to sin in ourselves. It is only to express this attitude toward sin in ourselves in other

[1] John xii. 24, 25.

words, to say that we have to mortify and crucify our own carnal and selfish selves.

And just as Christ summed up His attitude towards the world by His death upon the cross, so the Christian's attitude to the world was summed up in his baptism. At that moment he died to the world of sin[1]. This state of deadness to sin has to be constantly renewed, or again and again recovered. But it was in that sacramental moment realized in principle and symbolically represented. The convert who was immersed beneath the baptismal waters and emerged again, realized easily that this 'bath of regeneration' was, what the early Christians called it, 'his grave and his mother.' All the circumstances of his baptism forced it upon him that he had passed out of an old life into a new --that he died to one state of things and came to life in another. The Christians of St. Paul's churches, like newly-made Christians in Central Africa or India to-day, were very often highly imperfect; but they knew—they could not but know—that they had passed under a new allegiance; that like the just-converted Frankish

[1] It is one gain of the R.V. that for 'ye are dead' (Col. iii. 3, ii. 20), 'we are dead' (Rom. vi. 2, 8), &c., we read 'ye died,' 'we died,' i. e. at the definite moment of baptism.

idolater, they must 'burn what they had adored, and adore what they had burned[1].'

We in our generation, and in a country where Christianity has become traditional, realize this much less easily. It is not only that we have, in our Church and country, almost wholly lost the symbolism which belongs to baptism by immersion[2]; though that is as great a loss as any symbolic action, not necessary to the administration of a sacrament, can be. It is not only that we are as a general rule baptized in infancy, for that under right conditions[3] embodies a fundamental Christian principle and comes down from the origin of Christianity. It is much more that Christianity has been allowed to become conventional and cheap. It requires no effort or moral courage to own, in a formal sense, the name of Christ. The result is that masses of

[1] Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* ii. 31: 'To whom (Chlovis) as he enters the font to be baptized, the holy man of God (Remigius) thus eloquently spoke—"Meekly bow thy neck, Sigambrian: adore what thou hast burnt; burn what thou hast adored."'

[2] Baptism by 'affusion' began within the first century, but as the exception, not the rule. See app. note F.

[3] By infant baptism under right conditions, I mean the baptism of infants when there is some real security provided, through their parents or proper sponsors, for their Christian education, according to the intention of the Church. On the primitive origin of infant baptism, see *Ephesians*, pp. 230, 231.

men belong to the Church who are in practice living purely worldly lives, and that the Church and the world are fused together. Hence it follows again that what the majority of Christians do is supposed to represent a tolerable manner of life for an ordinary Christian, who does not profess to be better than his neighbours. Under these circumstances there is nothing which is more important than to reassert the law of life through death as the only Christian law of living. The 'old man' is as vigorous as ever. The world is still gratifying its sensual appetites and grasping after wealth without regard to the law of God. Malice, jealousy, and hatred are alive and flourishing. God is still being ignored, refused, blasphemed. That is to say, the world of sin is still what it always was. It is still under the same unchangeable wrath of God; and still therefore to live to God is only possible for one who will, and that deliberately and persistently, die to the world. The renunciation must be conscious and deliberate. The mortification and crucifixion of the 'old man' and 'the body of sin' must be painful, at times even agonizing. A reasonable Christian will be indeed surprised if something painful is not being continually required of him. And a reasonable Christian

rejoices to purchase, even by great sacrifices, the pearl of great price, which is fellowship with Christ:—'that he may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.' This is the point. It is not enough for us to be baptized. Our baptism is evacuated of all meaning unless we are also 'being converted,' or 'turning' from the world to God; unless we are turning our back upon its lawless lusts, its worldly ambitions, its graspings after money, its refusals of pain, its selfish and unloving life. Nay: all this renunciation was already involved in the Name spoken over us at our baptism. The Christian name pledges us to the Christian law of living by dying, progress by conversion. You cannot refuse the dying without repudiating the Name. 'Die and re-exist,' said Goethe, 'for so long as this is not accomplished thou art but a troubled guest upon an earth of gloom[1].'

'Reckon ye, therefore, yourselves to be dead unto sin.' This phrase, addressed to common Christians, supplies a magnificent instance of St. Paul's idealism, that is to say, of his love of con-

[1] 'Stirb und werde!
Denn so lang du das nicht hast,
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast
Auf der dunkeln Erde' (quoted by M. Arnold).

sidering things, and his desire that others should consider things, in the light of their central and dominant idea or principle—as they ought to be rather than as they are. This is his continual practice: to idealize not in the sense of thinking unreally of things, but in the sense of thinking of them in the light of that which is most fundamental in them. It is in this way that he thinks of 'the world,' or godless human society, and seems to represent it as worse than it sometimes appears, because its governing principle is radically evil. It is in this way that he thinks of the Church, and speaks of it in terms of glory not justified by the facts simply as they appear; because it has that at work within it which is capable of transforming it until it not only is, but looks like, the body of Christ, or the city of God. This idealizing method is naturally distasteful to English common sense in most departments of thinking, and perhaps particularly in the region of religion. But we suffer from an over-close adhesion to the 'matters of fact' or 'the things which do appear.' We do not think of our life, ourselves, our church according to the divine principle which they embody, or 'according to the pattern shown to us in the mount.' Thus

we are never uplifted, enlarged, ennobled by the vision of

> . . . The gleam,
> The light that never was on sea or land.

That light never was or is manifest on the surface of actual experience, and yet it is always latent—the touch of glory in common things, the radiance in even our dim world, 'the master light of all our seeing.' We have almost all of us got to learn the practical power of the Christian imagination, disciplined and spiritually enlightened, to enrich and ennoble actual life. The objects which our imagination should reflect are realities, but realities not yet developed. What our imagination should do for us is to teach us to see things not as they are, but as they are coming to be.

2. 'Life in Christ Jesus,' 'Christ living in me'—there can be no question that these beautiful phrases which, if St. John's witness be true, represent the teaching of Christ Himself[1], express also what is most central in St. Paul's idea of Christianity. It was the great merit of Matthew Arnold's *St. Paul and Protestantism*[2] that it re-

[1] John vi. 53-58; xiv. 19, 20; xv. 1–10; xvii. 21-23.

[2] P. 81 (2nd ed.): 'The three essential terms of Pauline theology are not, therefore, as popular theology makes them—*calling*, *justification*, *sanctification*: they are rather these—*dying with Christ*,

called the fact to notice in ordinary educated circles. Recent scientific study of St. Paul has gone in the same direction. The doctrines of atonement and justification are essential to St. Paul's theology, but not central: the doctrine of life in Christ, spiritual and moral identification with Christ, is both essential and central. The maintenance of this life of union is again, as Matthew Arnold teaches us, the final and most developed function of faith—'that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith'; for faith is, or grows to be, such devotion to Christ's person as desires to lose itself and its selfish aims in Him and His work. But Matthew Arnold strangely leaves out of sight the two-sidedness of this relation: we abide in Christ by faith,

resurrection from the dead, growing into Christ.' Cf. p. 76: 'How did Paul's faith, working through love, help him [to control appetite and self-will]? It enabled him to reinforce duty by affection. In the central need of his nature, the desire to govern these motives of unrighteousness, it enabled him to say: *Die to them! Christ did.* If any man be in Christ, said St. Paul—that is, if any man identifies himself with Christ by attachment, so that he enters into His feelings and lives with His life—he is a new creature; he can do, and does, what Christ did.' It would be truer, surely, to say in the first of these two passages not 'the three *essential*,' &c., but 'the three *central*.' Nothing can be more truly essential to Pauline theology than the terms, calling, justification, atonement; but the two last of them at least do not belong to the central region of religion, but have to do with the removal of preliminary obstacles to our entrance upon it.

because Christ first of all abides in us by His loving-kindness and grace. It is His love, always beforehand with us—not merely to forgive us our sins, but to pour itself out in the communicated Spirit—that takes us up within the circle of His own life; it is the act of God incorporating us into Christ which evokes and makes possible the response of our faith to realize His indwelling and make the adhesion mutual. God's gift is prior to our response and the ground of it; and moreover God's gift is permanent and abiding. It would indeed be a thought of despair if the bond between Christ and us depended upon the continuous energy of our faith to maintain it. Nay, it is always there—unintermittent through all our broken efforts and vicissitudes of will—always there for us to recur to. We are to reckon ourselves 'dead to sin and alive to righteousness,' because and only because we are also to reckon ourselves 'in Christ.' That is our permanent state, and it is the function of faith not to create, but to realize it.

It is St. Paul's clear and vivid perception of a divine gift given, a relationship to God established by God's act, not ours, and that at a particular time, which is closely connected with his

sacramental teaching. If a divine gift is to be given (1) definite at a definite time, (2) to men of body as well as spirit in a world not only spiritual but material, (3) publicly as to members of a social organization—it is most natural that the gift should be embodied in an outward rite and outward vehicle. So St. Paul appears to think. There is no shrinking about his sacramental language. It can be said with justice that certain forms of sacerdotal or ecclesiastical government which have appeared in Church history would to his mind have savoured, or more than savoured, of bondage to men and bondage to the 'beggarly rudiments' of ceremonial observances. St. Paul is very jealous of maintaining what we may call spiritual individuality and personal liberty. But there is no justification to be found in St. Paul's epistles for saying that he connects sacramentalism—i. e. the idea of necessary spiritual gifts divinely promised on the occasion, and through the medium, of certain outward religious rites of a community—with that 'bondage' to 'beggarly rudiments' of which he has so great a dread. St. Paul's language does not admit of our supposing that he knew of any other way of admission 'into Christ' except through the gate

of baptism, or any other means of communion in Christ's body and blood except 'the breaking of the bread.'

3. It will be necessary before we leave this great passage to give some special attention to three phrases.

'*Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.*' In the New Testament the sacrifice of Christ, the atonement won by Christ, is continually ascribed to the Father, acting through and in the Son—'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' So also the resurrection is uniformly ascribed to the Father's power acting in the case of the Son[1]. Our current Christian language has in both cases departed too widely from apostolic practice. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity would be more intelligently held, and the worship of the Church more normally offered in the Spirit through the Son to the Father, if we had not fallen into the habit of so speaking of the action of the Son in dying and rising as habitually to leave out of sight the truth that His action, as Son, is and

[1] The apparent exception is John x. 18; but even there the word rendered 'take' would perhaps be better rendered 'receive.' Christ had the right to lay down His own life and the right to receive it again from the Father. So Hort, *First Ep. of Peter*, pp. 34, 84.

must always be the Father's action through Him; and that reversely our worship of the Son must always be really, and ought to be in our habitual consciousness, the worship of the Father through Him.

'*Our old man was crucified with him.*' As Shelley said that, when Adonais died, ''tis death is dead, not he,' so in an infinitely deeper sense St. Paul says that what was killed upon the cross was (he does not say 'instead of Christ,' but 'with Christ') sin and the 'old man.' The 'old man' means the old way of living, or rather the old way of living considered as having been appropriated by the sinful individual and thus made his own self. Thus it was the old self that was put to death on the cross, and a new self came to life, which was the same in unchanged personality and yet so practically different in all its relationships, that it could assert and claim exemptions from the obligations contracted by the 'old man.'

'*That the body of sin might be done away.*' The identification of sin with the individual had been specially with his body. His bodily appetites and impulses and parts had been so used to the ways of sin as to become a 'body of sin,' and this, St. Paul says, has to be 'done away' or

annulled. It is not that we are to harm the body itself: for the body itself is good, and is to be offered, with all its members, to become the weapon of Christian warfare. There is indeed no material thing as such that is evil. The 'body of sin' means exactly 'the body considered as having become the receptacle of sin': as when our Lord speaks of the 'mammon of unrighteousness[1],' He means money which has become the instrument of unrighteousness, but which the children of light are to convert to profitable uses. 'To annul the body of sin' means, therefore, almost the same as 'to annul sin in the body' and leave the body free; but it emphasizes the fact that sin has got such hold of the body that to annul sin involves annulling the body: as St. Paul says elsewhere, 'I buffet' (or 'distress') 'my body and bring it into bondage[2].'

[1] Luke xvi. 9. [2] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

DIVISION III. § 4. Chapter VI. 15-23.

The perfect freedom is God's service.

The reiterated mention of the deliverance of the Christian from the yoke of the law—'Ye are not under law, but under grace'—brings up the excuse for licentious living in a new form:—'This very abolition of the strict power of the law in favour of a system of which the ruling principle is God's goodness, at least makes one willing to contemplate any particular act of sin[1], with a good hope of escaping punishment.' St. Paul meets the suggestion with a 'God forbid,' and then gives a deep reason for repudiating it, a reason however which is but a version of our Lord's saying, 'Every one that committeth sin is the slave of sin[2].' Every man is always acting under obedience. What he

[1] The tense of the verb in 'shall we sin' appears to indicate an act, not a habit of sin.

[2] John viii. 34.

does in a particular case represents an act of obedience to some master; that is to say, a taking service with him. Moreover it appears on reflection that it must be with one of two masters and cannot be with both, for 'no man can serve two masters.' It is either with sin, whose service ends in spiritual as well as physical death, or with Him to whom obedience is properly due, whose service ends in righteousness. What gives St. Paul reason for thankfulness in thinking of the conversion of the Christians at Rome, is not that those who became Christians became thereby exempt from obedience, but that they changed their allegiance from sin to Christ. At their conversion they gladly submitted to a pattern or standard of teaching—the teaching of Christ—to which they were handed over for the fashioning of their lives —that is to say, they were made free from sin only to become slaves to righteousness. He uses the word slavery because so long as their weak flesh shrinks from divine obedience, they must recognize that the life which is really liberty must be accepted even as a bondage, till it cease to seem so. In old days they offered their limbs as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness, and the result was a lawless life.

Now they must yield their limbs as slaves to righteousness with a view to a consecrated life. And the change of allegiance is surely matter for congratulation. They can recall the days when they were free from the service of righteousness, as being slaves of sin, and they can remember what fruit they enjoyed as the result of experiences which they now blush to bring to mind. Of such experiences death, moral no less than physical, is the result. Now, set free from sin's slavery and made God's slaves, they enjoy the present fruit of consecration to God and the ultimate prospect of eternal life. So long as Sin was their master he would pay them their wages, and the wages which Sin pays is always death. But now that they are surrendered into God's hands, and simply dependent on His loving-kindness, there is no question of wages, but the gift of His bounty is eternal life, in Him whose life includes their own, Jesus Christ their Lord.

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves *as* servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching

whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members *as* servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members *as* servants to righteousness unto sanctification. For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. St. Paul is here expounding the real meaning of human liberty. It is generally regarded as the power 'to do as one pleases' or a state of independence. But such a state does not exist. There is indeed such a thing as the absence of external control up to a certain point. That is an element of liberty, but it reaches but a little way. The true liberty is the power to realize one's nature and make the best of oneself—the power to be what one ought to be or is meant to be. The instinct of language, as applied to man, recognizes this. When we see a drunkard, we recognize a man the balance of whose nature is upset. The higher part of his nature is being dragged at the chariot-wheels of his lower. So,

be he never so free a citizen, we call him a slave—a slave of drink. On the same principle we speak of the slaves of lust or the slaves of money or the slaves of fashion or the slaves of popularity. By these phrases we describe various moral states in which some external or purely animal force dominates a man, and he loses his self-control, and his whole nature becomes disordered. The true order of human nature is that a man's body should be controlled by his will. Then he is self-determined. His whole life is the expression of a rational principle. He makes the best of himself. He is free to be a real man, according to the proper idea of manhood.

But how can this be? Can this reason or rational will in man stand and work of itself? Is it so constructed as to be independent? No. Just as truly as a man's bodily forces are drawn from sources outside himself, so his spiritual being depends on sources and motives beyond himself.

What does man's 'freedom of will' consist of? Speaking exactly, it consists of a power to *direct* a certain amount of physical force which passes into one's bodily frame, and to let it go out in one or another form of action, deed or word or

thought, more or less moral or immoral, spiritual or carnal. And this liberty of direction, when more closely examined, is found to consist in a power which the will has to choose between motives which present themselves as ideas to the mind and to hand itself over to one or the other. Some of these motives are derived from physical or worldly appetites; some are derived through the conscience or faculty of spiritual apprehension. If, in cases where the lower motives conflict with the higher, a man still yields himself to the latter, his life is spiritual; and it is so because it is determined by motives and reinforced by influences which come from beyond himself, and are in fact the motives and forces of the Spirit of God. But in neither case is he independent and free from obedience. He stands at a meeting-point of the spiritual and material world, and must be governed by one or the other. In either case man's life is played upon and dominated by motive-forces, infinitely vaster and mightier than himself. Let him try (as he has tried) to forget his necessary dependence—to detach himself from the higher obedience and to 'be as God,' independent—and he falls necessarily under the dominion of the lower forces, of his flesh or of the world. If he is to cease

to live below himself, he must consent to surrender to what is above himself. He must yield his spirit to the divine Spirit, which is its natural master. So he ceases to be carnal, or governed by the flesh, and becomes spiritual, or governed by the divine Spirit. And that is liberty. 'That man,' said Leo the Great, 'has true peace and liberty whose flesh is controlled by the judgement of his mind, as his mind is directed by the government of God[1].' God's service, and that only, is perfect freedom.

Man then is so constructed that he can only cease to fall below himself by being raised above himself. His life cannot fail to be stamped with the impress of sin unless it is stamped with the impress of God. The state of the Christian, surrendered to the fashioning of God, is that true dependence which is the true liberty. Independent of God, man stands at last over against God to get what his independent action has merited; and that is penal death, the inevitable outcome of misused faculties, enslaved to sin. Surrendered to God in faith, on the other hand, he receives into his nature, through all its open portals, the inflooding tide of divine love; and enters, enriched and uplifted, into the life that

[1] *Serm.* xxxix. 2.

is eternal, the life which he shares with Jesus, the life that is truly human and really divine.

It is of great practical importance that we should get a just idea of what our freedom consists in. There are men who, under the impulse of a purely materialist science, declare the sense of moral freedom to be an illusion. This is of course a gross error. But what has largely played into the hands of this error is the exaggerated idea of human freedom which is ordinarily current, an idea which can only be held by ignoring our true and necessary dependence and limitation. It is this that we need to have brought home to us. There is an admirable story among George Crabbe's Tales, called 'The Gentleman Farmer.' The hero starts in life resolved that he will not put up with any bondage. The orthodox clergyman, the orthodox physician, and orthodox matrimony—all these alike represent social bondage in different forms, and he will have none of them. So he starts on a career of 'unchartered freedom,'

> 'To prove that *he alone was king of him.*'

And the last scene of all represents him the weak slave of his mistress, a quack doctor, and a revivalist—'which things are an allegory.'

2. The phrase 'a form' or 'pattern of teaching,' is interesting. It suggests the idea of the Church as holding a 'pattern of sound words[1],' a definite body of instruction, which is to form the life of each person who gives himself over to her loving discipline. Christian faith is not a formless impulse; it is self-surrender to a corporate life ruled on a definite model of religious and moral teaching. What St. Paul has here chiefly in mind is moral teaching. But the moral teaching was inseparable from religious facts and motives. Nor is it difficult to ascertain from the allusions of the New Testament what the subjects were in which the first Christians were orally instructed, or, in other words, what constituted 'the tradition' which lies behind the written books of the New Testament. It comprised instruction in (1) the facts of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection[2]; (2) the meaning of sacred rites—baptism, laying on of hands, eucharist[3]—including the Lord's Prayer[4]; (3) the moral duties of 'the way,' and the doctrine 'of the resurrection of

[1] 2 Tim. i. 13.

[2] Cf. Luke i. 1–4; 1 Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3, 4.

[3] Cf. Rom. vi. 3; Heb. vi. 1–6; 1 Cor. x. 15, 16; xi. 23 ff.; Acts ii. 38.

[4] *Didaché*, 8; cf. below, p. 293.

the dead and of eternal judgement[1]'; (4) the meaning of 'the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost[2].' On all these subjects the books of the New Testament do not give the primary instruction, but imply that it has been already given.

3. The word rendered 'sanctification' (vers. 19, 22) is one which needs to have its primitive force restored to it[3]. The 'saint' is the person set apart for the worship and service of God. What is here translated 'sanctification' means literally (1) 'the process of being made fit for such worship and service,' that is, consecration as of a priest; or (2) by a slight transition of meaning, the result of such consecration, i. e. 'holiness.'

[1] Heb. vi. 1, 2; 1 Thess. iv. 1, 2; v. 2.

[2] See Hort, *First Ep. of Peter*, p. 18, for the fact that 'a recognized belief or idea [of the threefold Name] seems to be everywhere presupposed.'

[3] Cf. above, pp. 31, 32.

DIVISION III. § 5. Chapter VII. 1–6.

Freedom from the law by union with Christ.

St. Paul is full of two thoughts. The first is that of life out of death, living by dying. He had lived an old life in which 'those multitudinous motions of appetite and self-will which reason and conscience disapproved, reason and conscience could yet not govern, and had to yield to them. This, as we shall see, is what drove Paul almost to despair[1].' He had passed to a new life in which he found in actual, blessed experience that he could do the thing that he would. He could do all things—through Christ that strengthened him. For it was Christ who had been the means of transferring him from the old life to the new, and that by His own way of dying to live. Christ Himself had lived 'by the Spirit' deliberately and always. He

[1] Matthew Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 76.

had never failed morally to do the thing that He would. But so violent was the antagonism between His life of divine obedience (with the claims that it involved upon other men) and the sinful, wilful, weak world around, that the world could not tolerate His presence in it; and it came to this—that He could only live by the Spirit at the cost of dying to the world, i.e. choosing to be put to death sooner than give up obedience to His Father. He chose to die, and thus dying He lived through death in the life of the Spirit, and was raised again from death in body also. Now Christ had brought St. Paul—as He would bring all men —into union with His new life, and by the same method. St. Paul had had to die to the sinful world in order to live to God. But he, being not only a man but a sinner, was obliged not only, like Christ, to die to sin in the world—he had also to die to sin in himself. In other words, he had to 'crucify his flesh with its affections and lusts'—that is, 'his old man' or old way of living. He had, by the help of Christ's Spirit, to assert his inner self or personality against a false self—a false way of life—which had appropriated him and held him captive. Only by being emancipated from the

'old man' could he come to live 'in Christ.' It is this transference from the 'old man,' or old way of life, to the new, by means of a death that St. Paul here describes under the figure of a second marriage. The man's true self was as a wife married to 'the old man.' The old man was nailed to Christ's cross (vi. 6)—that is, the old way of life was put an end to, even with violence. Thus the wife, the human personality, is, according to the law of marriage, free to contract a second union with Christ, the second Man. This is one of the main thoughts in St. Paul's mind.

But it is entangled with a second. The 'old man' was closely associated with 'the law'—the law which had awakened it out of its life of moral apathy by its stern reminders of the will of God. The law had reminded, instructed, enlightened; but it could not give the inward power needed to obey its requirements. It served but to bring to light the tyranny of sin which made man incapable of yielding obedience to the will of God; it even augmented its power by stimulating it to opposition. The law therefore belonged purely and simply to the old condition of moral impotence—the life 'in the flesh' and not 'in the Spirit.' It fulfilled the

only function it could fulfil in awaking the consciousness of sin. Thus to pass from 'the life of the flesh' to 'the life in the Spirit' was to pass out of its dominion. This is the other thought with which St. Paul is occupied in the passage we are just going to read. This too he expresses with the help of the figure of death. Human law only regards a living man. Death acquits him from law by taking him out of the region where it applies. Therefore, when a man dies with Christ to the 'old man,' he passes out of the reach of the law which threatened the old man but had no function beyond that.

Each of these two thoughts is quite distinct and clear; but they are fused in the present passage. St. Paul begins with the second, to show that the 'dead' Christian is free from the law (ver. 1; cf. vi. 7). But marriage law is taken as an example of law, and by this link we pass from the second thought to the first. But the second thought requires the man's *self* to die with Christ to escape from the region of law. The first thought, on the other hand, requires the 'old man,' or old mode of life, to die, to leave the man's real self free to be married to Christ; and this change of subject

introduces confusion into the passage. The attempts to show that there is no confusion are not successful. In ver. 1 the idea plainly is that the self dies, as in vi. 7. In ver. 4 the main idea plainly is that the 'old man' is dead, and has left the self free to contract a new marriage. But the other idea is still sufficiently dominant to cause St. Paul to say 'ye died to the law,' instead of 'your old man was crucified.' Morally, of course, the two phrases mean the same thing; and one who, like St. Paul, is *dictating* a letter, is specially liable to verbal confusions even when his thought is clear.

After these explanations the analysis shall be made as brief as possible. St. Paul, having, in the latter part of the sixth chapter, shown that the abolition of the power of the law is no excuse for sin, recurs to and develops the principles which he has now guarded from abuse, viz. that the power of the law is past for the Christian. He is writing, he says, to men, whether themselves Jews or not, who understand what law means, and that its dominion over a man ends with his death. It has no jurisdiction beyond the grave. He takes the marriage law ('the law of' or 'con-

cerning the husband,' ver. 2) as an illustration. Without noticing the exceptions in the way of possibilities of divorce which the Jewish law admitted, he lays it down generally that 'the law of the husband' binds the wife till death, but death dissolves its power. When her husband is dead she is 'discharged' and free to be married again. (Here we have passed from the idea of a man escaping by death out of the dominion of law to that of his death dissolving the force of law in the interests of another, viz. his wife.) That is the state of the Christian's real self. Christ's body, St. Paul says, was nailed to the cross, and you were put to death there with Him; or rather, your 'old man' was put to death there, and you were left, like wives discharged from the marriage law by the intervention of death, free to be united to the risen Christ, and to see fruits of your new union such as God can approve. There were fruits from the former union with the 'old man,' in the days when you were still under the power of the flesh. The body was subject to feelings and emotions which, under the provocation of the law, became the instruments of sin; and these all at work in our limbs (constituting the 'old man,' and having

ourselves for the subject-wife) brought forth the fruits of actions fit only for a kingdom of death. But now we are discharged from the law, like the wife whose husband is dead, having died to that in which we were held captive, and come to life in a new region; so that we can be slaves—that, as we have seen in the last chapter, we must always be, so far as yielding a complete obedience is concerned—only no longer under the old bondage of a written law, but in the new freedom of the empowering Spirit.

Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, *even* to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.

1. If we ask ourselves what is practically meant by St. Paul's idea of the marriage of the redeemed soul to Christ, which supplements his thought of the whole Church as the bride of Christ[1], the answer seems to be that it is made up of a moral and a theological factor. The moral factor is the idea of the devotion of the believer to Christ—'as a young man marrieth a virgin.' The theological idea is that of the risen Christ making the soul of the believer fruitful in good works by infusing into it His own Spirit or life.

2. The conception of the freedom of the redeemed from the moral and ceremonial law is very easily realized by reference to our ideas of civic freedom in connexion with the criminal law. The criminal law exists, and the policemen are among its administrative officers, but the respectable citizen is free in his relation to the criminal law, and passes the policeman without any sense of alarm—not because he is at liberty to break the law, but because he has become accustomed to a way of living with which the agents of the law are not called upon to interfere. It is in a sense like this that St. Paul conceives the Christians to have escaped from the bondage of the Mosaic law.

[1] Eph. v. 22.

3. What is the meaning of the common phrase our 'passions'? It refers to those feelings which we experience without any action of our will. It may be a mere neutral sensation of smell. It may be a feeling of hunger, thirst, desire, anger. These are our 'passions' as opposed to our actions. These appeal to the will as motives, and it appertains to the will to determine whether it will yield to them and so translate passions into voluntary actions. When the will is weak, and passion is allowed to pass into action uncontrolled, the man becomes the slave of sin, and his passions, in themselves innocent or only constituting the material of temptation, become the 'sinful passions' of which St. Paul speaks in this place.

DIVISION III. § 6. Chapter VII. 7-25.

The function and failure of the law.

The somewhat confused passage just dealt with, in which several moral ideas and metaphors are struggling for the mastery, is followed by a famous passage of luminous power in which St. Paul expounds, with a profound insight into human nature, the function and failure of law.

The close alliance into which St. Paul constantly puts 'the law' with the reign of sin, an alliance hardly suggested by any other New Testament teacher, suggests inevitably the idea that St. Paul, like the later Gnostics, regarded the law itself as 'sin,' that is, as owing its origin to the power of evil and working for its ends. Such an idea he of course repudiates. But all the same it is law, written or proclaimed, and law only, which both awakens the sense of sin in man and stimulates sin itself to put

forth its power. Let me take myself, we may imagine St. Paul as saying (for the 'I' of this passage is very far from being strictly autobiographical), as representing man in his moral history. I was alive apart from any law once. That is to say, I lived as suited me best, according to my instincts, asking no moral questions and troubled by no scruples. And all this time sin, considered as a moral tyrant, was as if dead. I had no defined moral ideal and consequently no struggle and no failure. Then comes the law with its 'Thou shalt not covet' (or do this or that). It imposes limits in the name of God on my life of instinct. It cries 'Hands off!' At once I find opposition between me and the law. I do covet this and that which the law says I must not have. I find myself in the eye of the moral law a transgressor. And there is something more than my own lawless desire in opposition to the law. I become conscious of a great power of sin at work in the world and in me—something greater than myself, which intervenes in the struggle and reinforces the opposition to the law. The tyrant Sin rouses himself on the pretext afforded by the hostile commandment, and exercises his power both by stimulating my desires, like Eve's (ver. 8), and

deceiving my intelligence, like hers, to believe that good is evil (ver. 11), and so brings me by means of the commandment into a state of flat disobedience to the law, which is death. For the law was given for life—'This do, and thou shalt live'; but there is the necessary converse—'This transgress, and thou shalt die' (vers. 7–11).

The law then, it is quite plain, is the expression of the will of God. And the particular commandment is holy and righteous and good. Is the good then my poison? No. But what has happened is this—the expression of the good in the law has brought the tyranny of sin out into the light. It had me in its power before, but I did not know it and I did not struggle. But as soon as the law aroused in me the beginning of moral consciousness, sin used the commandment as its knife to kill me; and so showed its hideous character—which indeed it was the divine intention to uncloak by means of the law (12–13).

For this it is that we must recognize as the true state of the case. On the one hand a spiritual law proclaimed over me. On the other hand a man who in virtue of my fleshly nature have been sold to be a slave of sin, and who as a slave

find myself doing acts by force of circumstances, the true nature of which I do not understand, and which, so far from choosing, I hate (vers. 14, 15). For I am not only of this fleshly nature; I have also a conscience which responds to the claim of the law and recognizes it as right. But my wish to obey the law is not strong enough to carry my flesh with it. Thus my actual practice is in flat contradiction to the ideal of my choice. But henceforth my will is on the side of the law, and myself is in my will[1]. What runs so uncontrollably to evil is, it appears, not myself at all, but the alien tyranny of sin which has taken possession of me and made my flesh its haunt and instrument—the haunt and instrument of evil only and not of good. So I can only wish good and practise evil, and become more and more conscious that I am not my own master. The law of God, accepted by my will, becomes the law of my mind or inner being; but when I seek to impose it on my limbs and act accordingly, I find another law—the law of the tyrant Sin—holding sway in my lower nature; my authority is defied and

[1] 'I was myself in both [flesh and spirit], but more myself in what I approved than in what I disapproved.'—Augustine, *Confessions*, viii. 5.

I myself am dragged in humiliating captivity to sin in my lower nature (vers. 16–23). My body has become the death of my spirit. It is my prison-house. I cry out in my misery for deliverance. And it is this deliverance which I praise God for having given me through Jesus Christ our Lord. (By union with Him my higher self is reinforced, and I can control my lower nature and become my own master.) But in my isolated, unassisted self, the best that I can get to is a flat contradiction between the service of the law of God in my mind and the service of sin in my flesh (vers. 24, 25).

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet: but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting: for apart from the law sin *is* dead. And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which *was* unto life, this I found *to be* unto death: for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me. So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good. Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shewn to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good;—that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal,

sold under sin. For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good *is* not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. I find then the law[1], that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself with the mind serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

i.

St. Paul, as has been said, is constantly in his epistles of this period stating briefly or alluding to the failure of 'the law' to supply man with the moral strength needed to live a good life at peace with God. Thus: 'The power of sin is the law.' 'As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse.' 'The letter (the written law) killeth.' 'Through the law cometh the

[1] Rather, as margin, 'I find then in regard of the law': see below, p. 269.

knowledge of sin.' 'The law worketh wrath.' 'The law came in beside, that the trespass might abound[1].' The first of these sayings, occurring as it does altogether out of apparent connexion with the context, shows us as clearly as anything could how full of the idea his mind was. But only here, in this chapter, does he open his heart to us to show us the experience on which such a strange and original conclusion was based.

We can imagine a youth of intensely susceptible moral and religious nature like Saul of Tarsus passing out of the home of his boyhood into the school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem. The one subject of instruction there was 'the law'—the divine law which was the pride of Israel's race—in all the grand severity of its moral requirement and in all the complexity of its ritual regulations. It was the one topic. And all about him he saw the Pharisees building up the fabric of a meritorious life before God out of their observances. Now, no doubt the most easily self-satisfied Pharisees made much of the principle of compensation—that 'obedience to certain laws' (e. g. the law of the sabbath or 'the law of fringes') 'was as good as obedience to the

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 56; Gal. iii. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 6; Rom. iii. 20; iv. 15; v. 20.

whole[1].' The Pharisee of our Lord's parable who went up to the temple to pray, satisfied himself because he observed certain practices beyond the requirements of the law. Our Lord bears witness that the Scribes and Pharisees paid tithe of mint and anise and cummin—traditional extensions of the law—and omitted the weightier matters, judgement, mercy, and faith, yet were righteous in their own eyes. On the other hand, the maxim of St. James, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all,' was a commonplace of the Jewish schools.

There can be no doubt that it must have been the severer teaching that fastened upon young Saul's mind. He acknowledged himself a 'debtor to keep the whole law[2].' And in ritual detail, though no doubt the effort required was immense, he managed to be 'blameless[3].' But in the weightier and deeper matters it was not so. The moral law, enforced and commented upon, continually confronting him with its 'Thou shalt not,' brought to light in him the fact of sin —in desire, we should gather, rather than in act or word. The law said 'Thou shalt not covet' (or

[1] See J. B. Mayor in *The Epistle of St. James* (ii. 10), p. 86.
[2] Gal. v. 3. [3] Phil. iii. 6.

lust). And Saul said, 'But I do lust after this and that and the other. My heart and my desires are not in harmony with the law. Nay, the very fact that the law prohibits it seems to make my wrong desire stronger.' So the whole Pharisaic idea of a moral life—the standing over against God and building up a fabric of merits—seemed to be unsatisfactory. The fabric in his own case was full of internal rottenness. It would not bear severe examination. Moreover he could not but observe the lives of those around him who were so well satisfied with their moral edifices, and he recognized that their satisfaction was due to nothing but hypocrisy or shallowness. As he went later to Jewish settlements in various centres, he saw always the picture of a life fair in its own eyes and rotten in fact. His general experience of Jewish life is summed up strongly enough in the second chapter of this epistle. Thus he drew the conclusion that the law could not be really kept—it was only possible to keep it by means of evasions and compensations which made it worse than useless.

Meanwhile there was forming itself in Saul's mind the conviction that the whole attitude of the Pharisees towards God was false. They lived as if God had made a contract or covenant with

them, and within the terms of this covenant man could deal with God on an independent basis. God must keep to His covenant and not augment it or change it. And on their side the people of God under the covenant had nothing to do but to keep their part of the bargain and claim their reward with a conscious and proper pride in the merits of their race and of themselves. This was exactly the spirit in which they rejected Jesus as the Christ, as it was also exactly this spirit which He had chosen for His sternest denunciations. But all this idea of merits, all this boasting, must have come to seem to Saul's mind monstrously untrue to the real fundamental relation of man to God. For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou, O Jew, that thou didst not receive? And if thou didst receive it, why dost thou boast thyself as if thou hadst not received it? Thus St. Paul's training must not only have made him feel that he could not satisfy himself in keeping the whole law; but it must also have convinced him that law itself as a principle, law as understood and represented among the orthodox Jews, was fundamentally and permanently incompatible with the real relation of man to God. There were many elements in the Old Testament,

notably in the Psalms, in which a quite different relation of man to God was indicated—a relation of meek trust as of a son to a father, and of penitence and dependence and peace. But in the teaching St. Paul had received, the law, the legal covenant of man and God, which suggested a quite different moral attitude, was the essential element; and that, we must suppose, he felt increasingly sure was a foundation on which he could not stand.

No doubt these deep questionings about the law, and the growing misery accompanying them, made him at first all the more zealous for it. No doubt they explain his fanaticism against the Christians. No doubt his 'kicking against the goad' represents the rebellion of his heart against anything which seemed to threaten the position of the law of his fathers, and especially against the utter upheaval of foundations involved in accepting for Christ Him whom the leaders of his people had rejected and caused to be crucified. But when he had effected the great transition, when he had found in Jesus Christ all that satisfied his deepest instincts about God and his deepest desires for union with Him, his old experience of the law took shape in a profound theory of its place in the divine

education of the human race. Ultimately man is meant to be in such close and harmonious relations to the divine Spirit that he should both know what is right and do it by an inner light and power. But an outward written law was a necessary prelude to this; and that in the main because sin—individual sins and the long tradition of sin—had hardened men's consciences and blinded their eyes, and the divine law as proclaimed through the conscience had become in consequence either utterly inadequate or had even been silenced altogether. A written law therefore, peremptory and explicit, and announcing its sanction in definite penalties, was needed to teach men anew what God really required. It was given in such a mode as threw men on their own independent moral strength, and by that very fact convinced the best among them of their inward weakness and sin; while to many more it appeared rather as involving an impossible effort—as 'a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.' In either case it was their 'tutor to bring them to Christ'—with His teaching of God, not as a taskmaster, but as a Father, righteous indeed, but still more loving. And if there were others again, shallow or worthless men, whom the law simply hardened

in the superficial self-righteousness of mere 'observances,' or the worst sort of religious hypocrisy, that was only another way of demonstrating its inadequacy. It left the world to choose between the Pharisees and Christ as representing real righteousness.

This 'doctrine of the law' involves both its necessary function and its failure. There can be indeed to no thoughtful mind any doubt as to its necessary function. Conscience, individual and social, is continually going to sleep. It may be taken quite for certain that if Christ were amongst us in manifest power by His Spirit to-day—as He ought to be in the Church—our society as a whole would be smitten anew with a sense of sin, and not least of social sin[1]. Our familiar excuses for our selfish indulgence of our lusts, for our weak surrenders to passion and impulse, for our commercial dishonesties, for our failures to carry righteousness into politics, for our social injustices, for our selfishness and

[1] It is disappointing, I think, that the grave appeal to the Church as regards social duty, made by the bishops assembled at Lambeth last year in commending to the notice of us all the report of their Committee on Industrial Problems, has received such scant attention, except from a certain group of Churchmen who were already occupied with the problem. It might have been expected that this solemn appeal would have vastly widened the area of attention.

luxury, for our scamped and half-hearted work —the familiar pleas of commercial or physical necessity, or political exigencies, or lack of knowledge, or absence of responsibility, or the influence of heredity—would dry up and wither on our lips under the powerful glare of the divine 'letter'—Thou shalt, Thou shalt not. God hath not 'given any man license to sin,' He hath given no man exemption from the trouble or the suffering or the loss involved in doing right. The obligation is peremptory to be just, to be merciful, to be honest, to be self-denying, to be pure. And if we do not care to take the trouble to be so, the only alternative is to have Christ for our adversary, and find at last the horrible depth of meaning which His words contain—'Thus and thus have ye made void the word of God by your tradition.' 'Inasmuch as ye did it not, depart, ye cursed, into eternal fire!' 'It is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God maimed or halt or with one eye, rather than having two hands or feet or eyes to be cast into hell, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.' These and the like words are metaphorical—but metaphors which are intended to teach the heart only the more vividly because they are metaphorical.

Indeed, in each age, and therefore in ours, most fertile of excuses, we need the letter to kill us; the stern, outward, unmistakable announcement of God's will to assure us that God does not change with our whims or feelings, and cannot accommodate Himself to immoral necessities. In each age, and therefore in ours, most capable of moral self-deception, we need continual and forcible reminders that a quiet conscience is no adequate guarantee of agreement with God, unless we have taken pains to keep our conscience enlightened by meditating on the divine word.

And if St. Paul's account of the function of 'the law' is true, so also is his account of its necessary failure. It is obviously true if you confine 'the law' to meaning what in the tradition of the Pharisees it had come to mean, or what in his ideal way of thinking St. Paul defined it to mean—that is, not the whole Old Testament with its anticipations in prophecy and psalm of the temper of sonship and its evangelical forecasts of the new covenant, but bare precept, expressing externally and unmistakably the will of God. Mere law, instructing men truly and searchingly as to God's requirement in thought as well as word and deed, instructing

men and challenging them, and doing nothing more, is so manifestly incomplete an expression of God's relation to man, quite apart from all question of its ritual elements, that it can in the nature of things serve only a temporary purpose in the conscience, by leading us to a truer knowledge of Him who terrifies indeed, but only in order to reassure, and kills but only in order to raise to life again.

ii.

At this point it is necessary to answer the two much-disputed questions—and it is possible to do it briefly—Is St. Paul, in giving this summary of moral experience, speaking 'of himself or of some other man'? and—Is the struggle described in verses 14–24 to be regarded as occurring without or within the frontiers of the regenerate state?

There is no doubt that St. Paul must be in part really describing an experience through which he passed. He was really, we may imagine, 'alive without the law once' in the sense that he was brought up a happy Jewish child, under the law but not deeply feeling the terror of its claims, until he was growing towards

the 'independent' period of life and found himself confronted with its requirements in detail. There need be no doubt that he is speaking of some experience of his own when he alludes, here as elsewhere, to the deceitfulness of sin; and when he describes the two stages of moral progress—the first, in which the conscience of the man is awakened to recognize that his habitual practice is not in any full sense controlled by his reason and will; and the second, in which the will is deliberately enlisted on the side of good, and the man only made thereby the more conscious that his will is in no real control of his actions, but that he is the captive of the alien power of sin. In some sense, though St. Paul does not give us the materials for saying exactly in what sense, he must have passed through these stages of experience. He must have really felt himself the slave of sin, though the sin was of a sort which left him, 'as touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.' He must have felt that he could not do what he ought; and the bitterness of his persecuting zeal may have been in part the reflection of this sense of impotence.

And so far as St. Paul is speaking of himself, there can be no shadow of doubt that the state

of conflict lay almost wholly outside his conversion and regeneration. It was 'prevenient grace' —God's dealing with him before he acknowledged Christ—that set his will so strongly to desire and approve the right; and his new personal faith in Jesus, and the might of the Spirit of Jesus to whom he became united, gave him the power to do what he had so long and so ineffectually been willing. This was his experience, and he bears witness to it. Even though he would have made no claim to sinlessness after his conversion, yet the sense of sin which possessed him so strongly, which made him call himself 'not worthy to be called an apostle,' 'less than the least of all saints,' and 'chief of sinners,' was in the main a memory of what was past. The present sense was the consciousness of power in Christ. It is inconceivable that St. Paul should describe himself, while a Christian, as 'sold under sin.' And it was an idea of human corruption quite different from St. Paul's which prevented Augustine and Calvin from recognizing that either a pious Jew, or a Gentile which had not the law, could be moved by the divine Spirit to 'rejoice in the law of God after the inner man' (ver. 22), quite independently of any knowledge of Christ.

But if St. Paul is in a real measure autobiographical in this passage, there is no reasonable doubt that he is not merely so. He has generalized his experiences to represent the moral experiences of the race. The 'I' is the human individual in general. Thus 'alive without the law,' if it can in a certain sense describe what St. Paul had once been, describes much better the state of men—Greeks and Romans, or men all the world over 'before the law came'—who had an easy social standard and lived natural lives without any troublesome moral ideals, and were wholly unvisited by conscientious scruples or the terrors of the divine holiness. Upon such men comes the severer knowledge of the righteousness of God through the teaching of some prophet or founder of religion. It may come to men collectively in a nation or group, and result in some general movement of conscience. Or it may come to an individual through some circumstance which confronts him with a higher moral claim than he has ever faced before—through the example of a friend, through a book or a sermon. To many in St. Paul's day the synagogues, where 'Moses had in every city them that preached him,' had been the means of their awakening to the moral

claim of God. And whenever men are thus confronted with the divine law of righteousness, in a more or less perfect form and with more or less of impressiveness laying its prohibitions upon them—'Thou shalt not do this or that'—if they do not harden their hearts to it, they pass through the stages of experience which St. Paul has so admirably idealized. There is that in them which the prohibitions of the divine law stimulates into antagonism. They become conscious of a power which beguiles or cheats them into breaking the law; they awake to the sense of sin and failure to do God's will, and find that they are not their own masters, but are drifting under the impulse of what is not themselves. There awakens in them the conscience and will to approve and choose what is right, and with that a 'self-contempt bitterer to drink than blood,' as they realize that though they approve and choose the right they cannot do it. Thus the conviction is strengthened that their true selves are on the side of God and right, and that which holds them captive is an alien tyranny which has got its lodgement in their lower nature.

This is the psychological moment for the arrival of the gospel. The man who simply

desires the right and is paralyzed by his own impotence to realize it in his own strength, out of the depth of his despair learns that God is not a taskmaster and judge, but a Father; that He is not his adversary, but is on his side; that if he will simply surrender himself to the divine love, as it is made evident in Christ, all his past failures and sins are as if they had never been, and for the future God will not teach him from outside and leave him to struggle alone, but will work in him to will and to do His good pleasure. Then the sense of moral impotence may pass into the sense of power in Christ. And in proportion as any man's actual life-history, or the history of any group of men, corresponds to this ideal sketch, the period of moral struggle and failure may fall in the main outside the regeneration and new life in Christ.

But, almost from the beginnings of Christianity, and increasingly as Christianity has become popular, men have been 'christened' in infancy or in mature life without the moral issue having been defined or the moral will awakened. An ordinary Englishman, for example, is baptized in infancy. This means that he is actually regenerate and introduced into

the body of Christ. In rare cases he is so brought up as to realize this, and corresponds so willingly with the teaching that he lives the life of the regenerate from the first, and never, except in a very refined form, knows the sense of impotence or passes through the period of hopeless struggle. He has never found God's commandments grievous. But in most cases there is no such pains taken to enlighten the young conscience, or no such readiness of correspondence. The man lives as his surroundings suggest—a decent enough life, very likely, and more or less honourable, but never in face of the full divine law. And such an one is 'alive without the law.' For him all the experiences St. Paul describes are still to come, inside the circle of his actual regeneration. And they may be very gradual and slow, and may repeat themselves, more or less, innumerable times. St. Paul's is an ideal picture; but the intended issue is always the same. When we find ourselves saying, 'To will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not,' we may be quite certain that we are not realizing the power of our new birth. We are as men whom God has as yet only externally visited. We are conscious of our own weakness and of the

strength of evil; but not of the third force, stronger than either ourselves or the power of evil, which is at our disposal if we will draw upon it. What is needed is a deliberate and whole-hearted realization that we are *in Christ* and Christ is *in us* by His Spirit; an unconditional surrender of faith to Him: a practice, which grows more natural by exercise, of remembering and deliberately drawing by faith upon His strength in the moments of temptation and not merely upon our own resources. 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I will do thus and thus.' So we too may form like St. Paul the habit of victory. We too may cry in sober earnest 'It is no longer I that live (in my naked self), but Christ that liveth in me.' 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

When that sense of struggle or failure which St. Paul describes occurs, as is generally the case with us traditional Christians, in the process of our awakening to the knowledge of the new birth, we may in a sense say that the struggle is part of the process of regeneration[1]; but the word 'regeneration' best describes, not a process, but a single divine act upon us and in

[1] 'Inter regenerandum.' St. John will not speak of a wilful sinner as truly 'begotten of God,' 1 John iii. 9; v. 18, &c.

us[1], and this single divine act is consistently identified in the New Testament with our baptism, though it is only realized by our moral conversion when we awake to claim the privileges of our new life.

iii.

There are two smaller points which claim notice.

We are reminded by the way in which St. Paul speaks of sin, in this and other passages—as a force or power greater than the individual man, which possesses him and dominates him through his lower nature—and especially by the consciousness which he betrays of its 'beguiling' power, that he believed in personal agencies of evil. 'Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood (merely), but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places[2].' Particularly it is in the deceitfulness of sin that St. Paul realizes what one must call the personal character of the evil power[3]. He is profoundly conscious that

[1] See Dale, quoted in *Ephesians*, p. 86. [2] Eph. vi. 12.

[3] Cf. 2 Thess. ii. 9-11: 'The working of Satan with all . . . deceit of unrighteousness . . . a working of error, that they should believe a lie.' 2 Cor. xi. 14: 'Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of

there makes itself heard in temptation a voice as of a person which lies to us, as it lied to Eve, as to the true character of the suggested action; and when we have been deceived and seduced, and have done the deed, and its real character has become apparent, 'the tempter' turns round upon us with the grin of unmasked malevolence. Is there any one who can really dissociate from his own spiritual experience this idea of the tempter and the deceiver?

We do well to remember in reading this passage the meaning of the recurring word 'law.' In modern English it has come to mean the principle or method observable in anything. Such and such a thing, we say, exhibits such and such a law, i. e. acts constantly in such and such a way. It is natural therefore for us to read this meaning into the word in verse 21, as in the Authorized Version, 'I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me,' i. e. I find that this is what constantly happens. But the Greek word, as used in the Old and New Testaments, does not bear any meaning like this[1]. It means always the in-

light.' 1 Tim. ii. 14: 'The woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression.' Cf. Heb. iii. 13: 'The deceitfulness of sin.'

[1] It never appears to be used, as in classical Greek, for 'custom,' either in LXX or N.T.

junction or set of injunctions imposed by a law-giver. In this passage it is used seven times of the divine (Mosaic) law. When the will accepts this law and would impose it on the lower nature, it becomes 'the law of the mind,' i. e. the law which the mind enjoins (verse 23). With this conflicts 'the law of sin,' 'the different law,' which sin or the evil one would impose and which has gained actual sway 'in our members.' We must then interpret verse 21 in harmony with this use, and taking the sentence to be a broken one, translate, as the margin of the Revised Version, 'I find then, in regard of the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present.'

DIVISION III. § 7. Chapter VIII. 1–11.

Life in the Spirit.

If we were to represent the Epistle to the Romans as a *bas relief*, there would be two passages which would have to stand in the highest relief—the end of the third chapter, in which St. Paul speaks of that free justification which is given to all men on the equal basis of faith in Christ the propitiation for their sins; and this eighth chapter, in which he speaks of the triumph which belongs to the life of the justified, lived in the power of Christ's Spirit.

The note of this chapter is struck in the words 'no condemnation' at the beginning—'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' St. Paul knew so well what it was to be conscious of being under condemnation. He had never been what we should call a sinner. He had always been a man who, according to the standards of the

Pharisaic righteousness, was pre-eminently righteous; he had always been a man who did much for religion. But he had known, in a form in which it is known to very few of us, what it was to be conscious of being under God's condemnation. God had been to him as a taskmaster over against him, breaking in upon his life with continual and searching warnings as to the divine requirements, with continual threatenings and continual terrors; and he had been as one standing over against God with the consciousness that, do as he might, he could never satisfy, or climb up to the level of, the requirements of the righteous God. There was always the haunting sense that he fell short —always the haunting sense that he was on his trial, and on that trial was condemned. But now all had been changed; and that by a process which in a certain sense was as simple as possible, but than which nothing could be more fundamental and deep. All was changed because the relation had begun at the other end. No longer was there a climbing up of man to God, no longer the effort of a Saul to commend himself to God. The relationship had begun at the other end, at God's end. Or rather, what had begun was the realization on the man's

part of the true order. For God had been beforehand with Saul all along. All the time that he was striving, working, slaving to commend himself to a God whose righteousness he could never attain to, God was waiting there for him to find out his mistake—waiting to reveal Himself as no hard taskmaster, but as the Creator, the Father of his spirit. The process had now begun anew from the other side. God had simply of His own pure initiative manifested His love. He had sent His Son out of His own essential being into this world as it was, not asking whether it was a fit world for the Son to enter into; but taking it simply as it was, because it appealed to the divine compassion by the very multitude of its sins and the very vastness of its need, God had sent forth His only begotten Son out of the bosom of His love and of His pure initiative; had sent Him to take this nature of ours upon Him, in it to make atonement for us with God, and in it, raised from death and glorified, to be the source of a new and spiritual life, such as should triumph over sin in all who will believe in Him. That is the great point. It was all purely God's doing: a pure disclosure and act of God, who showed Himself ready to take

men as they were, to forgive them and entrust them with the divine Spirit, if they would only trust Him. God is no longer the taskmaster over against men, with His threats and His terrors. He is the Father who has given His Son, who has given men a sacrifice whereby He can forgive their sins, and has given them the Spirit of His Son into their hearts. God is on their side, and they are on God's side. That is the great change. And the object of it all is that what formerly seemed so unattainable might now be the very thing that proved itself practicable—to live according to God; that the requirement of the law might be no longer an impossible claim over us, terrorizing us with its perpetual threats, but that by the power of the new life in which we live, 'the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.'

The following is a paraphrase of the passage we are now to study:—

The result then of all that has been said is that the divine verdict of guilty, which went forth over men on account of their sins—that 'disclosure of divine wrath' which St. Paul had so profoundly felt and interpreted—hangs no longer over those who have passed into the new

life in Christ Jesus. In the old life, sin with its attendant death held sway over us and gave the law to our actions. But we were freed from that despotism in passing under a new and stronger authority. It is the divine Spirit, by whom we have been brought into the life in Christ, who now controls us. Of old the Mosaic law was powerless to help us. It could inform us of God's will, but it could not enable our poor weak human nature to keep His requirements. But God has provided an effective remedy for this state of things. He has sent His own Son to take our nature upon Him, and come in among our sinful race without any apparent difference between us and Him. He put Him simply among us and in our position, to be the sacrifice for sin; and thereby did for us what we had so failed to do for ourselves--passed effective sentence of condemnation on sin, and that in our own nature. [Do we ask how sin was condemned? The answer is, it stood condemned by the perfect sacrifice of reparation for sin, which the sinless Man made to the divine character on our behalf, when at the requirement of obedience He shed His blood. It stood condemned, still more fully, by the fact that God raised Him from the dead and exalted

Him far beyond the reach of sin, to the glory of His right hand, and made Him the head of a redeemed manhood, and poured forth His Spirit to be the new life of all that believe in Him][1]. And the object of this mission of the Son, and this judgement on sin in His person, was the creation of that new humanity to which we belong, which lives not under the control of human appetite, but under the control of Spirit: and because it so lives, in the life of Another, succeeds in the one point where man had hitherto failed, in keeping the righteous requirements of the divine law. Our new way of life, therefore, is contrasted with the old in its whole tone. For just as, if we live in fact under the control of our weak manhood with its wants and appetites, our mind and conscious aim is directed to minister to its purposes, so in the same way if our life is in fact controlled by Spirit, our conscious aim also is directed to spiritual purposes. And the two lives are contrasted no less markedly in their prospects.

[1] The passage in brackets expands the sense in which St. Paul conceives the Father to have passed sentence of condemnation on sin, in the person and through the sacrifice of Christ, in accordance with such passages as vers. 21–24; iv. 25; Phil. ii. 8–10; Eph. i. 15 ff.

The mind controlled by human appetites is under the doom of death, temporal and eternal. The mind controlled by the Spirit is in a state of life, so far as concerns itself, and of peace towards God. The mind controlled by human appetites is under the doom of death because it is at war with God. It does not, it cannot, keep His commandments. Those therefore who so live in their own strength merely, cannot please Him. But that is not now our state. We now live in the power of Spirit, since the Spirit of God and Christ—that is, Christ Himself—dwells in us. To have Him is the very meaning of being a Christian. Not to have Christ's Spirit, that is Himself, dwelling in us, is not to belong to Him. But if He does dwell in us, then, though the body must still pay the debt of death, because of sin to which it has belonged—nay though it is already as good as dead—yet the Spirit within us is a superior principle of life, because of the divine righteousness which it bestows upon us. And this life shall triumph over death in our case, as in Christ's. For God, who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also by the working of the divine Spirit which dwells in us, give life again even to our bodies, though now they are subject to death.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

1. St. Paul declares that the Father sent His own Son to redeem us in 'the likeness of the flesh of sin.' The word 'likeness' is the same as that used in the similar passage[1], where we are told that the eternal Son in love for us 'emptied Himself' so far as to take the 'form,'

[1] Phil. ii. 7.

or essential characteristics, of our servile human nature; nor only its essential characteristics, but also the outward conditions or 'likeness' of common men as they are. The point is that Christ, who Himself as man 'knew no sin[1],' appeared amongst us under all the circumstances of sin, and with no outward or apparent difference between us and Him—'in all points like as we are' with the single exception of sin in the will or in the nature.

2. In verse 3 the Authorized Version, and the margin of the Revised, translating the Greek literally, give us, 'God sending His own Son . . . *for sin*.' But the phrase 'for sin' is continually used in the Greek of the Old Testament for the sin-offering, and in the New Testament always has the sacrificial meaning attached to it[2]; and accordingly its meaning here must be so defined.

3. The flesh of man, considered as a material thing, is not evil. It was that which the Son took, and it was 'in the flesh' so assumed that He pronounced sentence on sin—in that very flesh which was sin's domain; as, in the Epistle

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21.

[2] See Heb. x. 6, cf. 18, 26; xiii. 11; 1 Pet. iii. 18; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10.

to the Ephesians[1], He is said to have 'abolished the enmity in his flesh.' The flesh as such then is not evil; but when, as in our fallen state, the proper order of our complex manhood has been reversed, and the flesh has become the predominant partner, having the mastery of the spirit, then it becomes a 'flesh of sin.' To live 'in the flesh,' or 'according to the flesh,' is to let the flesh have its way and be the master instead of the slave. Then the whole life becomes carnal—a carrying out 'the works of the flesh'—and even the rational faculty becomes a 'carnal mind.' What our redemption effects is to restore the right order and make the flesh again the instrument of the spirit—of the human spirit, that is, empowered by the divine Spirit, without which it cannot hold its ground. Then the whole life, with all its bodily faculties, becomes spiritual and carries into effect 'the works of the Spirit.'

In the passage we have been considering, the Revised Version distinguishes, by the use of capital letters, between the divine Spirit[2] and the human[3], or spirit in general; but the fact that the divine Spirit is what liberates and restores the human spirit is so much in St. Paul's

[1] ii. 15. [2] Verses 2, 9, 11. [3] Verses 4, 5, 6, 9, 10.

mind that it seems better to make the primary reference to the divine Spirit throughout.

It is of the greatest practical moment to grasp that, to St. Paul, the change in human life which comes about through our conversion and new birth is a change in order. What was managed from below is now controlled from above. That is the point on which we need to examine ourselves. Where do we begin from? Are we in the position of men struggling to manage their own lives, and commend themselves according to some standard more or less right, which either their personal pride or their social circle or the divine law has set up? If so, God is over against us, our taskmaster, our adversary, our stern judge, and our life is 'according to the flesh.' It is managed from below. It is ruled on its own level, and it fails. But there is another life which begins at once from the thought of God. God has made us, and therefore He is responsible for us. He has made me because He loves me. Therefore He is bound to make the best of me. If I will only put myself into His hands He is pledged, simply because He created me, therefore to redeem me, to save me, to glorify me. He takes that responsibility upon Himself. He has shown His

love by the sending and the sacrifice of His Son and by the gift of His Spirit. And His Spirit I have received. At a definite moment He came upon me. He entered into my life, as into those first Christians to whom St. Paul wrote, at baptism and by the laying-on of hands. This is the fact then. God is on my side. He makes Himself responsible for my being. If I will only entrust myself to Him with the cordial return of trustful love, then all that He has ever breathed into my heart of human possibility He will realize and bring to perfection. The requirement of the law shall be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.—This is a point of view upon which it is worth while reflecting deeply, and over and over again. Unless we are continually practising ourselves in this conception of life, we find ourselves falling back again into the attitude of one standing over against God with God for his taskmaster. And that is the false and always ruinous idea.

We must also take careful note of what St. Paul means by 'spiritual' and 'carnal.' 'Carnal' does not mean made of flesh, and 'spiritual' does not mean immaterial. That is carnal which is ruled by the flesh, ruled from

below. That life is carnal in which our spirit, meant for God, is dragged at the chariot-wheels of our lower life; and that is spiritual which is ruled and mastered by the Spirit. We must not suppose that we shall make our religion spiritual by disparaging external acts or bodily exercises of worship. No; that is spiritual which is ruled by the Spirit. The worship in 'spirit and in truth,' for us men who belong to the religion of the Incarnation, must be a worship in body. But it will be spiritual if it is full of spiritual intention. Secular business again is spiritual if it is ruled by the divine Spirit according to the law of righteousness. Politics are spiritual, commercial and municipal life are spiritual, art and science are spiritual, and everything that develops our faculties is spiritual, if we will allow the divine Spirit to rule in all according to the law of righteousness, truth, and beauty. For the whole of our being, with all its sum of faculties, is made by God and meant for God. What a mistake it is then, when people speak, as they so often do, as if sin were really natural, as if lust and worldliness were natural, and as if spirituality were something unnatural, belonging to another world. It is exactly the opposite. The only *natural* position for us is when our

flesh is ruled by the spirit. It is an unnatural usurpation when the spirit is dragged at the chariot-wheels of the flesh, when our life is dominated by lusts or appetites. That is the very overthrow of nature. And grace does but restore to us the true order of our being, when the flesh and all the faculties of our body are again controlled by the spirit, so that our whole being expresses a spiritual purpose and obeys a spiritual law. The same external acts are spiritual or carnal, natural or unnatural, according as they express or do not express the mind of the Spirit. The same physical facts are the basis of true married love, and of the wildest licentiousness. In the latter case they are carnal because they express no spiritual purpose; in the other case they are spiritual because, consecrated in the family life, they become the organ and the vehicle of the divine Spirit. God will be responsible for our whole life, our politics, our commerce, our marriage, the workings of our intellect, the workings of our emotions, all the parts of our nature. He will raise our nature up through death; He will consecrate it to life immortal in the divine city; He will sanctify it here and now: if only, and in all things, we will believe that He who made our

life is capable of making the best of it, and show ourselves ready to entrust it to His disposal.

4. We must notice what is implied in this passage about the Holy Trinity. St. Paul speaks[1] of 'the Spirit of God' (the Father), 'the Spirit of Christ,' 'Christ,' and then again, the 'Spirit of Him that raised up Christ,' as if all these expressions were identical; as elsewhere[2] he prays that the Father will strengthen men by His Spirit, in order that Christ may dwell in their hearts, and they be filled with the fullness of God. All which language means that where the Spirit is, Christ is, and where Christ is, God the Father is. So in St. John, our Lord speaks of the Holy Spirit as 'another' advocate who is to come 'in his name' from the Father; and yet adds that in the Spirit's coming He Himself will come; and with Him the Father—'we will come[3].' The sacred 'persons' are spoken of as distinct—personally distinct—and yet as so mutually involved in the action one of another that the coming of one is the coming of all. So truly is God one in three. We find something like this in human personalities under the influence of love. Each single personality is not

[1] Verses 9–11. [2] Eph. iii. 14–19.
[3] John xiv. 16, 18, 23, 26.

self-contained and exclusive. Love, to a real degree, fuses persons; and thus the husband and wife and child (to take the highest example) may be said to live and act in one another and through one another's influence. But this is only to a limited extent. We are also mutually exclusive. Our responsibility and actions remain individual and impermeable. What I am doing, I am doing, and not another. But with God the mutual interpenetration of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is represented in the inspired language as far more complete. The Godhead is a fellowship and relationship of perfect love 'in three persons.' But God is not three separate individuals. What each 'person' does the others do. The action of one involves all. God is inseparably one in His being and in His action. If the Father creates, He creates through the Son and by the Spirit. If the Son redeems, the redemption proceeds from the Father and is effected in the Spirit. If the Spirit sanctifies, it is from and in the Father and the Son. Thus when the Spirit came forth at Pentecost out of the uplifted manhood of the Son to impart to us all His richness, He came not merely to supply His absence, but to accomplish His presence. He makes Christ present within us, and also the

Father: so that God, three in one, dwells in the hearts of His people.

5. 'The requirement of the law is to be fulfilled in us.' Do we ask how we are to keep the whole of that terrible law? It is by obeying the commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves, in which the whole law is 'briefly comprehended[1].'

6. If in the last verse of this passage we read 'through His Spirit,' and not (as the margin) 'because of His Spirit,' then the Holy Spirit is expressly spoken of as the agent of our resurrection and, by implication, of the resurrection of Christ. And this is the natural function for the 'Giver of Life': indeed 'Spirit' means nothing else than 'breath'—the 'breath of life from God[2].'

[1] Rom. xiii. 9. [2] Ezek. xxxvii. 9; Rev. xi. 11.

DIVISION III. § 8. Chapter VIII. 12–17.

The life of sonship.

We are now in the Spirit. The divine Spirit dwells within us, and restores our nature to its proper balance by giving us control over our lower nature. The moral meaning and obligations of such a condition are plain, and St. Paul proceeds to enforce them. When our impulses and appetites solicit us to let them have their own way, we must give them to understand that they are making a claim which we cannot recognize and which, if we did, would lead us the way of death. On the contrary, it is these merely physical tendencies—the practices of the body when left to itself—that we must put to death by the power of the Spirit. And if we do this we are on the way of life. Why so certainly? Because we are sons of God—nothing less. Those who thus act under the Spirit's guidance are all of them sons of God. Further,

if we ask ourselves what sort of spirit we received when we became Christians, we know that it was not a spirit appropriate to slaves and calculated to bring us again into a condition of terror under a law. It was a spirit appropriate to those who have been adopted for sons of God, and it is in the power of that spirit that we cry out to God by the name of Abba, Father, in our familiar supplication. We have thus in our own spirits the sense that we are sons; and behind that and reinforcing it, the divine Spirit, by putting the word Father into our lips, bears the same witness. Well then, if we are thus children of God, we have the child's prospect of entering into our inheritance. Christ, our elder brother, has already entered into it, and we shall enter into it with Him, if we are content to take the Christian maxim for true, and suffer with Him on this side of death, that we may share His glory beyond.

So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The

Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified with *him*.

There are several phrases in this passage which we shall do well to notice.

1. *If by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Mortification is absolutely necessary, and at every stage of the Christian life. It is the carrying into effect in detail of the fundamental law of our new life—the law which the baptismal ritual was intended to teach—life by means of death. For the body had gained the upper hand: it had come to control the weakened spirit. Therefore the reinvigorated spirit must react upon the body and its impulses. It must make its government felt, and the physical tendencies must be checked, pruned, cut back. This is the Christian circumcision. And as Christ was first born, then circumcised the eighth day; so each new birth in Christ must be followed by a like circumcision of the luxuriance of animal appetites. We learn the lesson when we are children: we expect to be restrained and curbed: and unless we are very foolish we learn the lesson only more deeply in later life. There

is no single faculty or function of our being which can escape this law. No friendship can be cemented without mutual self-denial. No marriage, however founded on affection, can be blessed without the mutual pain of self-repression and concession. No art or science can be mastered by mere intelligence without moral discipline. No gift can be consecrated in its natural luxuriance. 'Every branch in Christ that beareth fruit, He pruneth it that it may bring forth more fruit.'

2. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* The New Testament language would have us regard all the baptized as regenerate and sons of God, but it will not let us mistake the meaning of this teaching. In any effective sense it is they, and only they, who are really *controlled by* the divine Spirit who can call themselves sons. As St. John says, freedom from sin is the only test of divine birth[1]. And the best way to make our new birth effective is to meditate on the gift which we, when we became Christians, did actually receive. We who, like the first Christians, received baptism with the laying-on of hands, did then and there receive (such is the implication

[1] 1 John iii. 9.

of St. Paul's language)[1] a spirit proper not to slaves but to sons of God, qualifying us to call on God as our father, and to co-operate in the purposes of His kingdom. It remains for us to claim these powers and privileges of our sonship, and to claim them to the full. Yet how many anxious-minded Christians of our day would appear to have received nothing more nor less than the spirit of slaves! They realize their religion as a restraint, a responsibility, a cause of fear. And such a servile religion is no doubt better than a hypocritical sense of sonship unaccompanied by the fear of sin. The wise man remarks that 'a servant that dealeth wisely shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part in the inheritance among the brethren[2].' But the spirit of the slave is not what we are called to. If we had more religion, if we would give it freer course, if we would consent to think less of our circumstances and more of God and His gifts, there would be less fear and more joy both in our work and our prayer.

3. *Abba, Father.* Our Lord, speaking in

[1] 'Ye received' (at a particular time), not 'ye have received'; cf. above, p. 214, note 1.

[2] Prov. xvii. 2.

Aramaic, the vernacular of Palestine, is recorded by St. Mark in His hour of agony to have said *Abba*. And even in the Greek-speaking churches of St. Paul's day, that sacred word was still used side by side with its Greek equivalent, according to the witness of this and the parallel passage, Gal. iv. 6. St. Paul appears to be referring to some occasion on which the Church was in the habit of calling on God with the Aramaic and Greek words side by side, and it is more than likely[1] that he is making a definite reference to the Lord's Prayer, as recited by the Roman and Galatian Christians in the form prescribed for us in St. Luke's version[2], beginning 'Father.' The retention by Greek Christians of an Aramaic word in a familiar religious formula, is like the later retention by the Latins of the Greek prayer, *Kyrie eleison*, or the retention by us of the names *Te Deum*, *Magnificat*, &c. St. Paul's meaning would come home to us better if we were to read—'whereby we cry *Our Father*.'

4. '*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God*.' This is a very

[1] See Chase, *Lord's Prayer in the Early Church* ('Texts and Studies,' Cambridge), p. 23. Cf. Hort on 1 Pet. i. 17.

[2] xi. 2.

important passage for showing that St. Paul did not in any way confuse the divine Spirit and the human, and that in his belief the divine indwelling did not in any way annihilate the human personality. Even in the closest union God remains God and man man. But the passage is at least as important as opening up a special avenue of insight into St. Paul's conception of Christian worship and spiritual life generally. He speaks first of a witness of the individual spirits of Christians to the fact of their divine sonship; and he distinguishes from it something greater, a witness of the divine Spirit, supporting the human. What exactly does he mean by this witness of the divine Spirit as distinct from the consciousness which — under the leading of the divine Spirit — Christians are led themselves to form? How are we to distinguish the Spirit's witness from the witness of our own hearts inspired by Him? Is it merely[1] that the 'consciousness (of the individual) is analyzed, and its *data* are referred partly to the man himself, partly to the Spirit of God moving and prompting him?' I do not think that a closer examination will lead us to be satisfied with this.

[1] S. and H., *in loc.*

The witness of the divine Spirit is apparently fixed by the context to consist in the supply to us of the phrase 'Abba, Father[1]'. It is the Spirit 'in whom we cry' (or, as the passage in the Galatians says, 'who Himself comes into our hearts crying) Abba, Father,' who thus, by suggesting this cry to us, bears witness with our own spirits that we are sons of God. Thus the supporting witness of the Spirit lies especially in a certain mode of address to God or formula of prayer which He supplies. But this 'cry' or prayer the Spirit supplies to the hearts of the Church as a whole. The whole Church, and not the individual soul only, is the Spirit's home. 'Know ye not that ye are (corporately) a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you'[2]? The witness of the Spirit is thus a witness borne in the whole Church, which supports and sustains the witness of the individual soul. This is a thought full of consolation. The life of the individual Christian reposes upon, and is infolded by, the larger life of the whole body. Behind his own spiritual consciousness, with all its vicissitudes, lies the inspired consciousness of the whole body, the witness of the Spirit; and this in part expresses itself in inspired

[1] Cf. Vaughan and Gifford, *in loc.*

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 16.

formulas—the Lord's Prayer, the psalms, the creeds of the divine name, the Church's worship; and these formulas, representing our best self, are to sustain us in our fluctuations of feeling, and carry us over our periods of dryness and insensibility. 'The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit.'

5. 'The inheritance' of the children of God, which in the Old Testament begins by meaning the Holy Land, was spiritualized into meaning the kingdom of the Messiah. 'They shall inherit the land for ever[1]': 'the meek shall inherit the earth[2].' And this kingdom of the Messiah is an eternal kingdom: 'they shall inherit eternal life[3]'—that is to be our inheritance as the chosen people of the Lord. And it is an inheritance not only incorruptible but inexhaustible: all share in it to the full of their capacities, and the abundance of those who share diminishes nothing from the richness that remains.

And into that inheritance Christ is 'the way.' His life shows the law by which it is to be won. It was a current Christian saying—'a faithful saying'—'if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign

[1] Isa. lx. 21. [2] Matt. v. 5. [3] Matt. xix. 29.

with Him[1].' And whenever we are inclined to complain at anything we may have to suffer, there is one thought capable at once of quenching all murmuring, because of its indisputable reasonableness—'It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master.'

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 11.

DIVISION III. § 9. Chapter VIII. 18–30.

The hope of the creation.

St. Paul has touched upon the familiar topic of Christian suffering, and he ends his great argument with a splendid encouragement to believers to suffer gladly, and that for a manifold reason. First (18 25), that the suffering is altogether inconsiderable by comparison with the glory to which it leads, and is in itself only a part of the universal travail-pang through which created nature as a whole is to produce a glorious new earth to be the habitation of righteousness. Secondly (26–30), that we are not alone in our sufferings. We have the support, within us and around us, of the Holy Spirit as our effective intercessor, and the consciousness of an eternal and infallible purpose of divine love which is taking effect stage by stage in the case of each one of us whom God has made members of His elect body. The following is a paraphrase.

The sufferings in which this present situation involves us Christians are quite inconsiderable by comparison with the heavenly glory which is destined to be disclosed and to include us. The sense of this glorious future pervades the whole creation. Nature is like some on-looker at a spectacle craning the neck to see what is coming. She is waiting for the final disclosure of the children of God in their true position; knowing that she too—as a new heaven and a new earth—will share that glorious future. At present her powers are continually frustrated; failure is everywhere; the law of corruption is upon her like a bondage. This curse she was subjected to, through no will of her own, by the simple fiat of her Creator—but not for ever: she was left to hope for deliverance from this bondage into a state of freedom—a share, that is, in the freedom which is to belong to the final glory of the children of God. With this in mind we can bear the universal spectacle of pain. What we have always heard hitherto, wherever we have lent our ear all through nature, has been groans; but they are the groans as of a woman in travail: and in these groans we, God's chosen people, though we already possess the first instalment of the divine Spirit,

the pledge of what is yet to come—in these groans we bear our part, and also in the hope that accompanies the groaning. We groan expecting to realize our sonship, as that can only be realized when body as well as soul is redeemed from all evil. Hope is thus the very condition on which we received our spiritual deliverance when we became Christ's. And hope means nothing else than a condition of expecting good things not yet in sight. It means the readiness to endure till they come.

And there is another reason why we should be glad to bear our present sufferings. It is because, though we are weak in ourselves, we are not left alone. Of ourselves we should be bewildered and not know even what we ought to ask God to give us. But we have in the Spirit who dwells in us a divine advocate and intercessor. His intercession makes itself perceptible to us in groaning desires after a better condition, desires which cannot be put into words, but which are intelligible enough to God. He who searches the hearts interprets the longings we cannot express—understands, that is, the Spirit's meaning; for He is God's own Spirit, and the intercessions He makes for us, the consecrated people, express God's own

intention. And what that intention is towards us we know. We know that it is an intention of good which cannot fail for those who love God; or, in other words, for those who are the subjects of the divine purpose and call—an intention of good to which everything, even seeming evils, must minister. For God's purpose reaches from eternity to eternity, and cannot be baffled from without or fail by the way. Those whom in eternity He designated beforehand as instruments of His will, those He also eternally destined for the highest human perfection—for the blessed lot of being made like His own Son, as He should be hereafter incarnate, so that He might be an elder brother in a great human family: and those who were thus appointed beforehand for this high destiny, in due course He called into the elect body. And those whom He thus called He acquitted and accepted for righteous: and whom He thus accepted He crowned with glory.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage

of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for *our* adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. For by hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it.

And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, *even* to them that are called according to *his* purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

i.

There are passages in the New Testament which are unique. Such is the passage in St. Peter's epistle about Christ preaching in His disembodied human spirit to other spirits in Hades—a passage vaguely suggestive of wide thoughts and hopes, and leading us to suppose

that the ideas which it contained were familiar in the apostolic circle, but standing alone, with practically nothing to elucidate it from outside. And the passage just read about the groaning of creation in travail-pains is unique, not because there is not a good deal to elucidate it in other parts of the Bible, but because St. Paul in his treatment of common material strikes a note of sympathy with nature from nature's point of view, which is heard nowhere else in the Bible.

In Genesis we read that 'the ground was cursed[1]' because of man's sin, in the sense apparently that, as the penalty of his sin, nature was to be made a rougher home for him, and he was to extract his food from it only with pain and sweat. Isaiah is perhaps interpreting this primitive lesson in more modern tones when he cries that 'the earth is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth[2].' In this sense certainly, if not in some more recondite

[1] iii. 17–19; v. 29.

[2] xxiv. 5–7.

sense also, the ground is stricken with a curse as a result of human sin. And there are parts of the world where no lesson seems more patent. At any rate, whatever be the interpretation given to it, it was part of the common Jewish teaching that 'though all things were made very good, yet when the first man sinned they were corrupted, and shall return no more to their proper state until the son of Pherez[1] shall come[2].' For the curse was not to be for ever. There was a good time to come—a new heaven, a new earth, wherein righteousness should dwell—'A restoration of all things,' and not merely of man[3], which should accompany the coming of the Messiah. This was a most popular idea in Jewish hearts. 'I will transform the heaven and make it an eternal blessing and light. And I will transform the earth and make it a blessing and cause mine elect ones to dwell upon it: but the sinners and evil-doers shall not set foot thereon[4].'

Here then we have the common belief which St. Paul inherits and uses. He lays indeed very little stress upon the connexion of the earth's present condition with human sin, if he

[1] i. e. Messiah, son of David, son of Pherez (Ruth iv. 18).

[2] *Bereshith Rabbah*, xii. 5.

[3] Isa. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22; cf. 2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1; Acts iii. 21.

[4] *Book of Enoch*, xlv. 4, 5.

even alludes to it. He only says it was 'subjected to vanity' by the decree of the Creator, and that with a glorious prospect. It is upon the present aspect of the creation and its great prospect that his eyes are set. And his superiority to contemporary Jewish thought is shown by the fact that in his vision of the future he is catholic and cosmic. What he is contemplating is not a world renovated in order that one chosen race may be happy and glorious, but a renovated world for a perfected humanity. And in his representation of the present aspects of nature he strikes an extraordinarily modern note by exhibiting, as it were unintentionally, a deep and real sympathy with nature in her pain from her own point of view. The Psalms can supply examples of a real sympathetic fellowship in the happiness of creation—a happiness which modern pessimists strangely ignore. But here we have, as nowhere else in the Bible—perhaps nowhere in ancient literature—a man who feels with the pain of creation [1]. He notes how much 'vanity' there is in nature—how much that is ineffective and disappointing, how much waste and sadness —by reason of the omnipresent law of corruption,

[1] St. Paul's word 'creation' (verses 20-22) is used in St. Paul's sense in Wisd. xvi. 24, xix. 6.

dissolution and decay under which she is laid. He feels this as from nature's own heart. And he has an ear for the universal cry of positive pain, pain as of a woman in travail, which is one at least of the most unmistakeable voices of nature. But he has got an explanation of this universal pain which makes it tolerable to him. It is the pain which accompanies a birth. The pain, as in the case of the woman, is to be justified by the issue. Nature 'eagerly expects' as well as 'groans': and will doubtless 'remember no more the anguish, for joy' of that which is the fruit of her agony. For there is a destiny for the whole material world which includes man. As man is to be perfected and spiritualized in body no less than in mind; so the whole man, perfected in glory, is to have his place in a world emancipated in like manner from failure and pain.

Perhaps the most important consideration to be derived from this passage is that St. Paul's thought is equally alien to a one-sided spiritualism and a one-sided materialism. A one-sided spiritualism, such as is represented to-day by (most falsely-called) 'Christian Science,' either disbelieves in the reality of matter altogether, or regards it with its attendant qualities of weakness and pain as evil and a thing to be ignored. The religion of

the Incarnation, on the other hand, as represented by St. Paul, recognizes it as God's creation and the temple of His presence. In our manhood, as scientific investigation assures us, we can exercise no activity of spirit except as parts of a material world, through the senses and by the instrumentality of the bodily organs. Spirit and matter are in us so linked together that the real difficulty to a thinking Christian is to conceive at all of a 'disembodied' state of the personal human spirit after death which is in any sense a living state. But such a 'disembodied' state —if the word really represents the truth—is unnatural and temporary. The perfected human spirit is to have an embodiment which is to be material, as being truly a body, but also spiritual, because it is to be the fitting organ of the perfected spirit, in no way embarrassing or clogging its activity by any grossness or corruption. This is the Christian hope, definite in principle, if quite unaccompanied by any anticipated knowledge of method or details. And this destiny of the human body cannot be separated from the destiny of the material universe as a whole. Matter as a whole is to have an unending development like spirit, and a development with a justifying purpose of glory in it.

And St. Paul is equally opposed to the materialism which gives to matter a substantive existence apart from spirit. Metaphysical inquiry assures us that we can have no conception of a material object, or of matter in general, except as related to a consciousness or spirit; or, in other words, except as an adjunct to some sort of personality. Such metaphysical inquiry did not lie in St. Paul's way. But he is in harmony with its results when he contemplates a glorified nature as still relative to glorified personalities. Nature is to share the revelation of the glory of the *sons* of God.

We cannot help wondering, as we read these verses, whether St. Paul had in mind that occasion when, before the chosen witnesses, Christ was bodily transfigured on the holy mount by an anticipation of the glory destined for His sonship; and the apostles felt their hearts thereby encouraged to believe more surely in the teaching of the prophets about the general glory that was to accompany the final manifestation of the Christ[1].

When St. Paul talks of nature 'groaning' and (still more) 'eagerly expecting,' is it merely a poetical personification, as Chrysostom and most

[1] 2 Pet. i. 16–19.

commentators suppose, like that of the Psalmist when he makes 'the floods clap their hands'? It may be so. George Crabbe, in his *Delay is Dangerous*, draws a singularly beautiful picture of a late autumn morning as it appeared to a dejected man, and he ends the description with the lines:—

> These things were sad in nature, or they took
> Sadness from him, the likeness of his look.

Is the latter the true explanation? Is there no sadness or eager desire in nature independently —I will not say of spirit, but of the human spirit? It is sometimes very difficult to believe this. And may not the Christian belief about angels make the fancy legitimate, that every created thing has some accompanying intelligence—higher or lower—which consciously realizes its beauty and its joy, and also its pain and its hope? If this be so, then there is not merely deficiency and pain, but the consciousness of this deficiency and pain, a real groaning and a real expectation, in the great fabric of nature. We may legitimately imagine this; but we have probably no right to attribute such an imperfectly-based speculation to St. Paul[1].

[1] Cf. Latham, *Service of Angels* (Cambridge, 1894).

ii.

It is very interesting to notice the various points of view from which St. Paul contemplates the great ideas of 'redemption,' 'adoption,' 'salvation.' Christ redeemed us by the shedding of His blood, and we entered into the redeemed state individually and were adopted as sons when we became Christians. This is, beyond all question, St. Paul's belief. But when he contemplates the outward conditions of the redeemed man, and finds them quite incongruous with freedom and sonship, so wholly unashamed is he to require that these outward conditions shall be transformed, and body as well as spirit shall be redeemed, that he speaks as if the great hope were still unrealized and we were still only expecting to be redeemed and adopted—'waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' He thus retains the intensely Jewish language of what we may call Christ's own Apocalypse, when He bids His disciples, as the Day of the Lord approaches, to 'look up and lift up their heads: because their redemption draweth nigh.'

The uses of the words 'saved' and 'salvation' are still more remarkable. If we are con-

templating the finished work of Christ, we are led to say, 'By grace have we been saved[1].' If we are considering our own individual entrances into this great salvation at the time of our believing or becoming Christians in baptism, we say, 'It was upon a basis of hope that we were saved[2].' If we are considering the progressive life of the believer, we say, 'He is being saved[3].' If we are looking to the great and final hope, we say, 'We shall be saved.' 'Our salvation is nearer than when we became believers[4].' This simple set of facts about New Testament language throws a great light on the popular revivalist question—'Are you saved?'

iii.

Our Lord once asked one who came to Him to be healed—'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?' and a very devout modern writer[5] builds upon this an argument that we ought to learn continually to pray with more definiteness and detail. Probably it is true to say

[1] Eph. ii. 5. [2] Rom. viii. 24.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 2; 2 Cor. ii. 15. (The present tense in both cases.)
[4] Rom. v. 9, 10; xiii. 11: cf. 1 Tim. iv. 16; 2 Tim. iv. 18.
[5] Andrew Murray's *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (Nisbet 1891), p. 71.

that the advanced Christian learns to pray more definitely for spiritual things, as he grows in spiritual discernment and sees more distinctly what God's moral will is for himself and others. But there is no similar growth to be expected in the knowledge of what outward gifts will really help or hinder us and others. And it is with his eye chiefly on the outward conditions of the Christian's life that St. Paul here says—'We know not what we should pray for as we ought'; and teaches us that 'The Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to God.' We must be content to recognize, even while we half-ignorantly pray for what we think we need, that '*all* (outward) things work together for good to them that love God.' St. Paul had learnt that lesson when he himself 'besought the Lord thrice' that his great physical trouble might be removed from him, and was refused[1]. The Son of Man Himself prayed only 'Father, *if it be possible*, let this cup pass from me,' and learned in experience that it was not possible. These lessons may suffice to humble any one who grows over-confident that he knows what outward circumstances are best for himself or his friends or the Church.

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 8: cf. Phil. i. 22, 'What I shall choose I wot not.'

We all feel deeply the imperfection of our prayers: how weak, how ignorant they are! And St. Paul consoles us with the belief in an intercession—perfect, all-knowing, divine—which supports and sustains and, we may say, includes ours. The 'intercession of the Spirit' in our behalf, carried on, it is implied, 'in the hearts' of the saints which only God searches, is mentioned nowhere in the New Testament but here. But it is not to be separated from the intercession of Christ which is mentioned just below[1]. Christ's intercession is 'at the right hand of God,' but also He has by the Spirit taken us up into His own life. He dwells in us by His Spirit. By His Spirit we are knit into one and made His body. Doubtless, then, dwelling thus by the Spirit in the body, Christ intercedes for us. This is the intercession of the Spirit, which is also the intercession of Christ—an intercession gathering up into one, and sustaining and connecting and perfecting, all the imperfect prayers of all the saints.

This interceding Spirit is in Himself perfectly conscious of God's mind and purpose, and God is perfectly conscious of His. He intercedes 'according to God.' This intercession

[1] Verse 34.

is but a form of the perfect divine life. But in the heart of the Church this desire of the Spirit can make itself felt only in groanings for the divine manifestations which, like the aspirations which music suggests or expresses, are too deep to admit of articulate utterance. St. Paul, when he speaks of groanings which cannot be put into words, is perhaps thinking of the 'tongues' in which the spiritual emotion of the first Christian churches found expression. And we should think of some earnest act of corporate Christian worship when, under the workings of the one Spirit, the strong desire after what is holiest and highest possesses men, and binds them together with a sense of longing for the divine manifestation which could not be put into definite words.

St. Paul speaks of the groaning of suffering nature (ver. 22), and the groaning of the individual Christians (ver. 23), and also the groaning of the divine Spirit in the Church (ver. 26). No word could express more powerfully the intense desire after the manifestation of the divine kingdom which, in St. Paul's mind, should lie at the heart of true Christian prayer.

And the true prayer of the Spirit—the prayer which is according to God—is described (ver. 27)

as 'on behalf of saints[1]'—on behalf of a separated and consecrated body. It follows, that is to say, the lines of Christ's own prayer—'I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me.' It is through the sanctified life that the divine influences are to spread over the world: and by praying for the consecrated body we are praying that that life may be exhibited more and more perfectly amongst men so as to strike their consciences and move them to conversion; that through our good works which they now behold they may glorify God in the day when they themselves are visited. The New Testament method of praying for the world is thus in great part indirect. But the direct method is also enjoined. We are also to pray directly 'for all men[2].'

iv.

There is, I think, no point on which St. Paul has been more misrepresented than on his teaching about predestination. He teaches plainly that it is God's purpose to 'have mercy upon all': that He 'willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the

[1] Not 'the saints' in the Greek. [2] 1 Tim. ii. 1.

truth[1].' But He works towards this universal end through a method of selected human instruments—through an elect body. Such an elect body had been the Jewish nation—selected, we cannot tell why, but very possibly in part because of its capacity for coherence and toughness, coupled with a singular aptitude for simple religious ideas—qualities which in themselves of course were the gift of God. This nation might have expanded, as was intended, into a catholic church. But, as it refused to correspond with its vocation in this respect, in fact the catholic Church appears in history as taking its place, even while it was developed out of it—an elect body gathered out of 'every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues.' The election of this catholic body to be the heirs of salvation and to bear the name of God in the world was, it would have been held, a self-evident fact. St. Paul reasons not up to this fact but from it. He uses the admitted fact to strengthen its individual members under stress of trial. They must bear earthly troubles because they form the appointed discipline for the individuals who form the select body. Let men but love God, and then all outward things

[1] Rom. xi. 32; 1 Tim. ii. 4.

whatsoever work together for good for them. The fact that they love God is the sufficient evidence of their election. Those who love God are also those who are 'called according to His purpose.' But, we ask, Have none received the call and rejected it? were none called, who do not love God? is it not true, that 'Many are called and few chosen'? St. Paul says not a word to the contrary. But that is not the question he is considering. The members of the Christian Church, devoted to God, to whom he is writing *have* been called. This call of which they have become the subject is, St. Paul assures them, no afterthought, no momentary act of God, which as it came into being in a moment so may pass away. It is not a being taken up by God and then perhaps dropped again. His gifts and calling are without repentance on His side, because they represent an eternal will. In the eternal mind God 'foreknew' this chosen body. To 'know' as used of God (in contexts where it is implied that others are not 'known') means to 'take knowledge of' or mark out for a divine purpose, as God said of the Jews, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth[1],' that is, your

[1] Amos iii. 2: cf. Ps. i. 6; Hos. xiii. 5; Matt. vii. 23.

nation only have I singled out or designated[1]. This divine marking out then was an eternal act. God eternally marked out certain persons, those presumably whom a certain preparatory discipline and moral education, Jewish or heathen, should have made apt for His purpose, such aptitude being of course again His gift. Anyway, for reasons which we cannot probe, God did eternally foreknow or mark out beforehand a body of men to be His catholic church. And those so marked out were in the eternal counsels appointed for a high spiritual vocation, to be made like the divine Son, who was to be made man, so that, with Christ as heir and elder brother, they together might represent in the world the divine ideal for man. And upon those so marked out and foreordained, in due time the divine call came by the apostolic preaching. And, at the first movement of corresponsive faith, they had been acquitted of all their old sins and planted all at once upon a new basis in Christ Jesus. And those thus set upon the new basis God also had already in His divine counsels clothed with glory, their share in the glory of the divine Son which is only waiting to be fully manifested. Every

[1] Cf. Hort on 1 Pet. pp. 19, 80.

Christian therefore who has felt a movement of God in his heart, under which he has become a Christian, knows that he is in God's keeping. God will not fail him. He who has begun the good work will perform it. Trouble and anxiety within or without need not alarm him. He has but to keep himself, joyful and confident, in God's hands. The movement of God upon him and within him, as it proceeds out of the eternal mind, so it passes securely on into the eternal issue. No doubt St. Paul would say they might tear themselves by utter wilfulness out of the divine hand, as for the time at least the Jews had mostly done. But short of that they are safe. The movement of God, the protection of God, the purpose of God, is upon them and around them, and goes before them preparing their way, individually and corporately.

This is the moral use St. Paul makes of the doctrine of predestination. And it is to do egregious violence to his general teaching to suggest that he entertained the idea of persons created with an opposite predestination—to eternal misery. St. Paul is dealing here only with what God has already shown of His purpose in the actual vocation of some. Ultimately

he assures us all men share the divine purpose for good[1]. But, on the other hand, he never suggests that they may not resist it, or allows us to say that so far as concerns themselves they may not defeat it.

[1] See especially Rom. xi. 29-32.

DIVISION III. § 10. CHAPTER VIII. 31–39.

Christian assurance.

ST. PAUL has brought his great argument to an end. And before he passes to its manifold application in the later parts of his epistle, he applies it in words which spring glowing from a heart on fire with the gospel he loves, to reassure disheartened and nervous Christians. It was a natural feature of the apostolic age that the disciples should lose their first courage and become afraid, when the hard experience they were to expect became plain to them. The Epistle to the Hebrews is written full in face of this failure of courage among Jewish Christians. For the Gentiles whom St. Paul has more particularly in view there were manifold causes of alarm—fears derived from their own weakness, from spiritual uncertainty, and from their precarious position. It was not only that outward calamity—famine and pestilence—might

come on them like other people. They plainly felt—St. Paul plainly felt, as he thought of the bitter hostility of the Jews actually ready to break out upon the Church, and of the jealousy of the Empire, not yet hostile but easily capable of becoming so—that times of persecution were at hand: that the Christians were truly in the world as 'lambs in the midst of wolves.' Therefore he would have them realize the whole secret of that invincible strength, that power to endure and triumph, which ought to be theirs.

What is to be our practical conclusion, he asks, from all this theology, from all this consideration of revealed facts and truths? The sum of it all is that God is not our taskmaster and critical judge. He is altogether on our side. And if this be so, whose hostility can by comparison come into consideration at all? God showed His mind toward us by the greatest possible act of self-sacrifice, the giving up of His own divine Son to die for us. And, plainly, if of His free love He gave us His greatest gift, He will not fail to accompany it with everything that love can suggest. Or, to put the matter in another way, if God, in full knowledge of what we were, thought proper to take us for His chosen

people and to put us in a position of acceptance with Him, who can with any hope of success bring a charge against us or pass condemnation on us? For we know the mind of the only judge. Or, once again, what can be so reassuring as to consider the person of our advocate or mediator? It is Christ Jesus, God's own Son in our nature, who died a sacrifice for our sins, but so far from being conquered by death, was raised from among the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God, and there is occupied in presenting Himself before the Father in intercession for us—covering all our approach to God with His acceptableness. Out of the protecting power of this love of Christ, then, who shall tear us? It is quite true that troubles may beat upon us—outward affliction, or inward trouble, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword. We may find that only the words of the Psalmist[1] suit our case, 'For thy sake are we being put to death the whole day: the estimate formed of us is that of sheep meant for slaughter.' But in all these contingencies the love of Christ can supply us with a more than victorious power. For this is St. Paul's conviction, that no conceivable power

[1] Ps. xliv. 22.

of life or of death, or of the angelic hierarchy, nothing in present circumstances or future destiny, no possible force, neither the highest height of heavens or the deepest depth of hell, no possible creation of God other than what we now know to exist, shall be able to tear us from that which holds us in a grasp stronger than the strongest—the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, who is our Lord.

What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;
We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is not much that needs comment in these verses. We may notice the contrast

between the tone of the Psalmist quoted by St. Paul—weighed down, like many a servant of the older covenant, with the unintelligible experience of the persecution of God's faithful people—and the exultant faith of St. Paul which finds no difficulty in the experience at all. Again, we do well to observe that among the forces enumerated by St. Paul which cannot tear us out of the hand of God, he does not include our own wills, and we could not even conceive him so including them. Once again, we take note how 'the love of Christ' (ver. 35) is resolved (ver. 39) into the 'love of God in Christ Jesus.' Christ's love is God's love, as Christ is truly proper and essential to the being of God, His own very Son.

These words, I say, need very little comment, but they thrill our souls as hardly any other words of St. Paul. They are the real summary of this epistle, and show us how the glorious apostle of Christian liberty would have us view our life. We are not to build the edifice of a life which at the top is to be within sight of God. We are to start from God who from eternity and all along has been beforehand with us: in His external personal love predestinating, creating, calling, pardoning, holding, and keeping us

in continual growth for eternal glory. And the one power of religion is therefore faith, that faculty by which we look continually out of ourselves, and starting from God, committing ourselves wholly to God, raise the fabric of life, in the community of a true human brotherhood, upon the secure basis of the love of Him who created us, and will satisfy utterly the being which He has given us. This is the summary lesson of the great epistle.

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